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THE ALTAR.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.

THE ALTAR:

OR

MEDITATIONS IN VERSE

by Revd Isaac Williams B.D.

ON

The Great Christian Sacrifice.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

"Quid enim sunt aliud corporalia Sacramenta, nisi quædam quasi verba visibilia?"
ST. AUGUSTIN.

LONDON:
JAMES BURNS, 17 PORTMAN STREET.

MDCCCXLVII.

" Omnes Sancti et Electi Dei, qui jam revelatâ facie, in patriâ, visione beatâ aspicitis, et pleno jam ore manducatis Panem illum, quem nos nonnisi per speculum in ænigmate conspicimus, et alienâ specie velatum accipimus; vos enim felices portum tenetis, ad quem nos miseri tendimus; ô quot inter tempestates et pericula Viatico egemus, ut superemus! Viaticum Christus est; Via [illegible]ue, Veritas, et Vita, et unicum solatium peregrinationis nostræ."—*Paradisus Animæ.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Illustrations of this book have been done in the only way which the writer found practicable; and if they serve to embody and convey the thoughts and intentions of the work, it is all that he could expect. The undertaking is but experimental; and although formed upon the model of an ancient and foreign publication, yet the adapting it to our own Church has been in many cases like forming a new work. It is intended to confine the attempt to a very limited circulation, and it will be sufficient if it should meet the approbation of those who lament how much the system of symbolical adaptation has been lost to our branch of the Church; and yet how Scriptural and Catholic it is, and how sure to appear in some shape or other when devout feelings are awakened. Such persons, in the holy thoughts which it suggests, will forget the inadequate execution of the design. And perhaps among them some one may be found who will be able to carry it out to a greater perfection.

The work itself may be considered as nothing else but a lively and poetic representation of the saying of Thomas à Kempis: "So great, so new, and so joyful ought it to seem unto thee, when thou celebratest or partakest in these Holy Mysteries, as if on this same day Christ hanging on the Cross did suffer and die for the salvation of mankind."

But with regard to the particular parts of the symbolical representation;—there are some persons who seem naturally incapable of entering into such analogies; and even among those who are disposed to appreciate them, some may think, there is sometimes but little grounds of correspondence, on which to found the connexion. But it must be considered that where the adaptation is continuous and successively sustained both in the history of the Passion above and in the Divine Office below, it must necessarily be the case that in some points the application should be less appropriate, and even, it may be, sometimes appear forced and constrained. But the analogy upon the whole, and correspondence to our own Service, is sustained almost, if not quite, as well as it is in the work from which it is taken; and, indeed, the adaptation is in many instances the same. If, again, any should doubt the propriety of at all altering the ori-

ginal work by a new adaptation, and thus appropriating to ourselves what was intended for another Communion Service, it must be observed, that although the principle of a symbolical application is generally received in the Church from which it is taken, yet the particular points thus applied, and the mystical sense thus given them, does not appear to be always the same in their own publications; and therefore it may be considered as in some degree arbitrary. It would have been, for some reasons, better to have selected the Communion Office of the Church of Scotland for a purpose so sacred instead of our own; but this would have detracted from one great object of the work, which is, to connect such associations with a service in familiar use, so as to afford practical lessons to ourselves. Add to which, it appears a part of dutiful piety to make the best of what it has pleased God to afford us, and the reverential improvement of which seems the most dutiful way of obtaining our lost privileges, and of strengthening the things that remain; while we hold fast the better part, or pray for its restoration and lament its loss.

The poetry which has been introduced has for the most part no other connexion with the general design, than that it takes the various subjects of our Lord's Passion for the objects of devout contemplation, as they successively arise in the pictures. In the illustrations of the Communion Service the cope has been substituted for the dress usually worn. It being the ecclesiastical garb required by our canon in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, and still in use at our coronations, may be a sufficient sanction for its introduction; but it has not been used merely for these reasons, nor in order to recommend the adoption of it, whether advisable or not; but it may be remarked of such pictures, as of forms of speech, that the more antiquated and "foreign" (to use Aristotle's expression) are often most suitable to poetry, especially on subjects of the affections. With regard to the opposite side of these pictures, it may be taken to represent the Communion of Saints, knit together in one Body, as partaking of that one Bread; and holding the Head as signified by the Prayers which are successively inserted between the two figures. The introduction of so many of these names into our own calendar is a sufficient indication that we may be allowed in some measure to consider as our own such Saints of the Universal Church.

January 16*th*, 1847.

CONTENTS.

	SUBJECTS	PAGE
THE GATE OF GETHSEMANE	I.	1
THE GARDEN	II.	5
THE CUP OF AGONY	III.	9
THE KISS OF JUDAS	IV.	13
CHRIST IN BONDS	V.	17
THE HOUSE OF ANNAS	VI.	21
THE FALL OF ST. PETER	VII.	25
THE PENITENT RESTORED	VIII.	29
PILATE'S JUDGMENT-HALL	IX.	33
CHRIST BEFORE HEROD	X.	37
PILATE AND HEROD RECONCILED	XI.	41
CHRIST STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS	XII.	45
CHRIST SCOURGED	XIII.	49
THE CROWN OF THORNS	XIV.	53
"BEHOLD THE MAN!"	XV.	57
CHRIST CONDEMNED	XVI.	61
PILATE WASHING HIS HANDS	XVII.	65
CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS	XVIII.	69
THE MOURNING WOMEN	XIX.	73
THE NAILING TO THE CROSS	XX.	77
THE CROSS LIFTED UP	XXI.	81
THE CROSS DROPPING BLOOD	XXII.	85
CHRIST PRAYS FOR HIS ENEMIES	XXIII.	89
THE PROMISE OF PARADISE	XXIV.	93
THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND ST. JOHN	XXV.	97
CHRIST EXPIRING ON THE CROSS	XXVI.	101
CHRIST'S BODY ON THE CROSS	XXVII.	105
THE BURIAL OF CHRIST	XXVIII.	109
THE COVERING OF CHRIST'S BODY	XXIX.	113
CHRIST RISEN	XXX.	117

	SUBJECTS	PAGE
CHRIST APPEARING	XXXI.	121
THE FORTY DAYS	XXXII.	125
THE ASCENSION	XXXIII.	129
THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	XXXIV.	133

Christ approaching the Garden of Gethsemane.

THE INTROIT,
or approach to the Altar.

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour Thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the Incarnation of Thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE ALTAR.

I.

THE GATE OF GETHSEMANE.

1.

"I was left alone,—and there remained no strength in me."

LORD, who for us wert pleasèd to appear
  Shorn of Thy glories on that dreadful night,
  And in that terrible eclipse of light
To know the agonies of mortal fear,
In human sympathies thus to draw near
  To us Thy creatures;—and e'en now in sight
  Entering the cloud of sorrows infinite
At that dread gate of anguish, black and drear,
  Didst bid Thy friends adieu, while far below,
Cedron, that brook of sorrows,[1] fled away,
  Sighing in dark affright;—in all our woe
  Be with us, when beneath th' approaching rod
Of our own sins we tremble, in that day
  When man must stand alone to meet his God.

Conf. 2 Sam. xv. 23, 30; St. John xviii. 1.

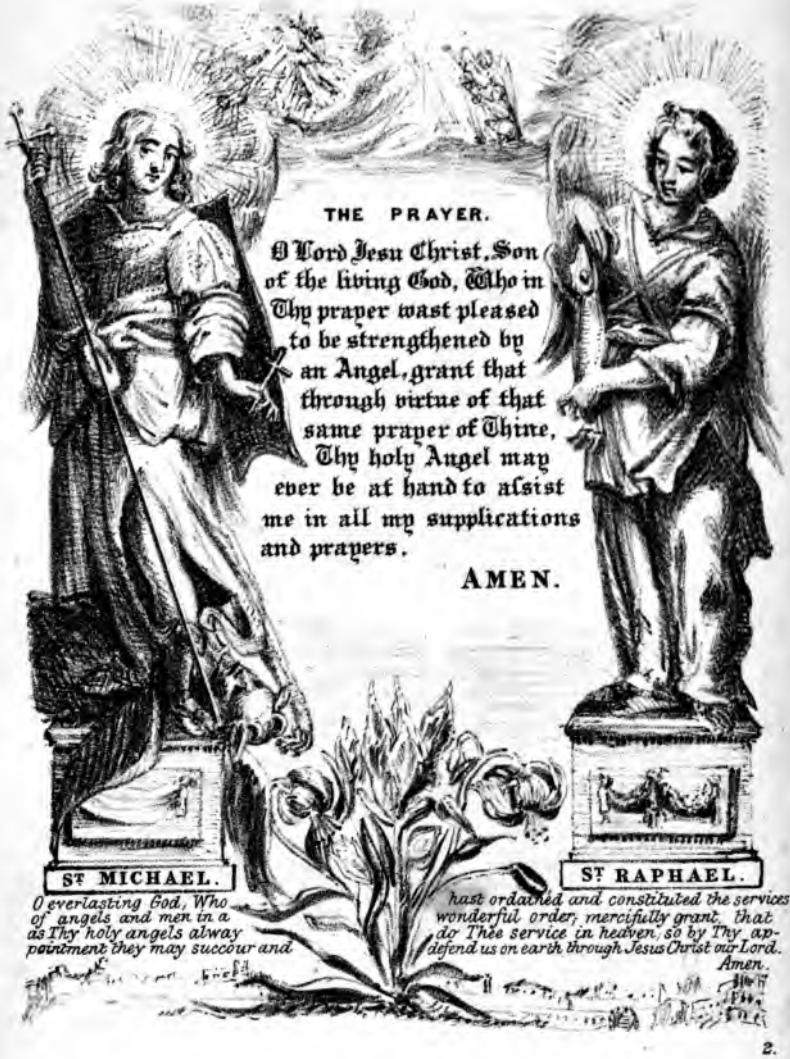
6.

"Thou art a place to hide me in."

And therefore now, in this dread interval,
  Ere we in Judgment before God appear,
  Whene'er I to Thine altar would draw near,
In solemn preparations would I call
On solitude and silence; and from all
  Withdrawn, which wakens here love, hope, or fear,
  Commune alone with mine own self, and hear
Thine awful whisper in the judgment-hall
  Of mine own secret soul, that cavern deep
  Whence issue streams of life. So may I weep,
And in Thy tabernacle long to hide
  From the world, from myself, and from my sin;
And where the door is open in Thy side,
  With eager arms outstretching enter in.

Christ kneeling.

The Lord's Prayer.



O everlasting God, Who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order, mercifully grant, that as Thy holy angels alway do Thee service in heaven, so by Thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II.

THE GARDEN.

1.

"The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him."

THE stars are silent o'er our heads above,
  The graves are silent 'neath our feet below,
  And silent are the deepest thoughts we know;
Silent our God, in Whom we live and move;
And silent the unutterable Love
  That pleads for man, while he still to and fro
  In busy noise and loud tumultuous show
Is hurrying day by day, as if he strove
  To drown that Voice which to his heart is given;
Yet wheresoe'er Thy Spirit wakes him, there
  Is stillness as of stars in summer even.
Thus round Thine unseen throne still every where
Unutterable silence speaks Thy prayer,
  "Thy will be done on earth, as 'tis in Heaven."

2.

"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

"Father, not Mine own will, but Thine be done,"
  Thrice spoken, and in speaking thrice fulfill'd;
  And so whate'er the Human nature will'd
Is lost in the Divine, and made all one,
In perfect love and perfect union:
  The o'errunning cup is drain'd, no drop is spill'd,
  Each thought in perfect resignation still'd:
The beatific crown for us is won,—
  The Manhood join'd to Godhead. Thus to grieve!
  Thus even from a creature to receive
One gleam of consolation sent from Heaven,
  One drop to lighten that o'erwhelming cup,
  Or strengthen the weak Hand that raises up
The bitter chalice,—which to us is given!—

3.

"A sore burden, too heavy for me to bear."

Given to us sinners, our due penalty,—
  But ta'en by Him and drunk for all mankind:
  And worse than bleeding scourge or thorn entwin'd,
The wounded spirit's secret agony,
Which yields itself to death, yet dreads to die.
  There is a weight upon each mortal mind;
  The good, to their own burden oft resign'd,
To bear some brother's burden fain would try;
  But He doth bear the burden of us all.
Yet why that lamentable thrilling moan?
  The earth is weak, and trembling to her fall,
And her inhabitants are feeble grown,
  Like wither'd leaves at winter's early call.
He beareth up its pillars all alone.

4.

"Why shouldest Thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save?"

Yea, where else shall we find a solitude
  Equal to this; in this His Paradise,
  In this the garden of His agonies,
Wherein alone the Second Adam stood,
Wherein alone He kneel'd down, sweating blood,—
  From Him withdrawn all human sympathies,
  And bliss Divine all hidden from His eyes,
In wrath for our transgressions! Only good,
  He bows beneath the wickedness of all,
  And prays like some sin-burden'd criminal:
While groans of sick creation through all time,
And all the woes that flow'd from Adam's crime,
  Concentrate were in that dread agony,
  And found their utterance in that sad cry.

5.

"I have trodden the wine-press alone."

Thus our High-Priest enters the holy place
  With His Own Blood to intercede; and now
  Calls us to join with Him, and leaves below
His prayer, and His example, and His grace;—
His Spirit in our hearts, in this short space
  Given for repentance. Thus He bids us know
  His groanings of unutterable woe,[1]
And 'neath the cloud of God's averted face
  Mourns in our heart of hearts. O awful scene!
Where our High-Priest, as if within the vail,
  By us below is interceding seen,
In that dark night of anguish kneeling pale,
  With crying, and with tears, and failing breath,
  Pleading with Him Who can redeem from death.[2]

[1] Rom. viii. 26. [2] Heb. v. 7.

6.

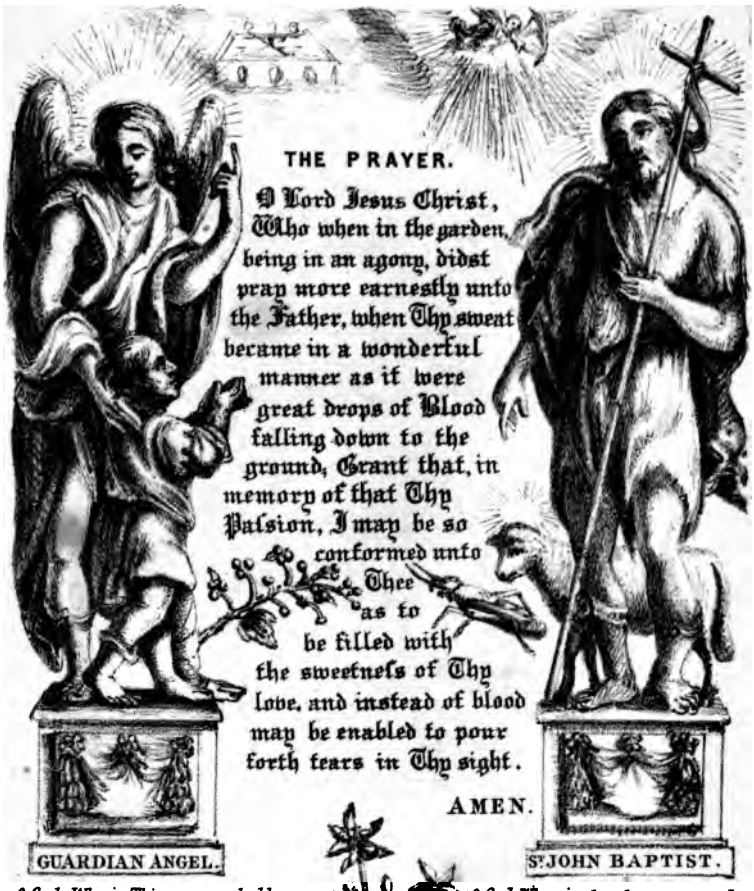
"He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope."

Lord, unto me Thy warning Voice reveal,
  Lest the world steal my heart, and hide the theft;
  But, of her soft appliances bereft,
May I in that bereavement learn to feel
That one thing still is given me—thus to kneel
  And be as Thou; that one thing still is left—
  That where Thy Flesh is rent, the Rock is cleft,
Thy Hand may for a while from man conceal
  What I am now, what I have been before.
And I, if I may find a refuge there,
May oft and oft repeat that holy Prayer,
  Closing the door; and while I thus explore
  The deeps of sad self-knowledge, more and more
Humiliation learn, but not despair.

Christ fallen to the Ground.

COLLECT FOR PURITY OF HEART.
"From Whom no secrets are hid."

3.



O God, Who in Thine unspeakable providence, deignest to send Thy holy Angels for our protection, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, that being defended here below by their ministrations, we may hereafter rejoice in their eternal society; through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. &c.

O God, Who givest us to commemorate on this day the wonderful birth of Thy faithful servant John Baptist, grant that we may attain to the grace of spiritual joys, and direct Thou Thy faithful servants into the way of everlasting salvation; through the same our Lord &c.

III.

THE CUP OF AGONY.

1.

"My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recal to mind, therefore have I hope."

TEACH me with Thee to mourn,—from Thee to learn
  The comfort of the mourner[1] on that day:
  From Thy pure Presence let one piercing ray
Lighten our darkness, that I may discern,
And with that inextinguish'd fire may burn
  The foul black spots within me,—sins that weigh
  With burden of an infinite dismay
On Thy sad soul, that knows not where to turn
  From the big load of our unnumber'd sins,
Which comes upon Thy spirit's solitude,
  As when some storm-fraught thunder-cloud begins,
Falling upon the ground with drops of blood.
  Oh, bind me to Thine altar, that no more
  I add each day I live to that sad store.

[1] St. Matt. v. 4.

2.

"If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

"In sweat of thine own brow thou shalt eat bread;"
  This was man's penalty; and here he lies,
  Driven from that Garden of his Paradise,
Here in the wilderness, as one half-dead,
With sweat of blood upon His Body shed,
  That we may in that costly Sacrifice
  Eat of Life's Bread, and know its countless price,
With bitter herbs and sorrow. While our Head
  Is thus bow'd low unto the very ground,
  Oh, may we learn the lesson most profound
Contain'd in that His prayer; and from the sight
Know that mysterious penalty aright—
  The cost of that true Bread His death shall give,
  Whereof alone lost man can eat and live!

3.

"Not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

Then take Thou us beneath those sheltering wings,
  Where God and Man at every bleeding pore
  Hath open'd for our sins Thy pardon's door;
We touch, see, feel our God, while memory clings
To every part which meditation brings
  Before us; thus the cup that floweth o'er
  With these Thy sorrows is for evermore
The cup wherein our health and gladness springs.
  The cup we give to Thee is deadly wine,
Made of the poisonous grapes our sins have borne;
  Thou givest in return the cup Divine,
Full of Thy love; and for the thorny crown
We give to Thee, Thou givest to Thine own
  Wreaths bright with radiance of celestial morn.

4.

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth."

For me, then, is this awful Sacrifice,
  That Thou art drooping low, and dropping blood,
  In this the stillness and the solitude
Of that dread hour, and every drop the price
Of thousand souls; and yet returning thrice,
  In love for those who in an hour so rude
  Were sleeping 'neath that dark green olive-wood,
With that still quiet voice of meek advice!
  With wayward man He ever gently pleads,
But forces not his will, though standing by:
  And yet for him, e'en while He speaks, He bleeds
At every vein, as seeing dangers nigh,
While he unconscious looks up vacantly,
  And nought discerns, then sleeps, and little heeds.

5.

"And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."

Within the lowest deep a lower deep
  Receives the penitent in true self-hate,
  Whose heart the thoughts of Thee shall penetrate;
Who more and more would fain his bosom steep
With rays of light from heaven, and wake to weep
  The sins that fold themselves in our dark state,
  Lest that e'en now our foes be at the gate,[1]
And at our going hence arouse from sleep,
  And summon us to bondage. While our eyes
Are weigh'd down by a seeming false repose
By spirits of darkness, He our danger knows.
But from this fathomless abyss of woes
  Who shall raise up the Maker of the skies,
  Fall'n to the ground in speechless agonies?

[1] Psalm cxxvii. 6.

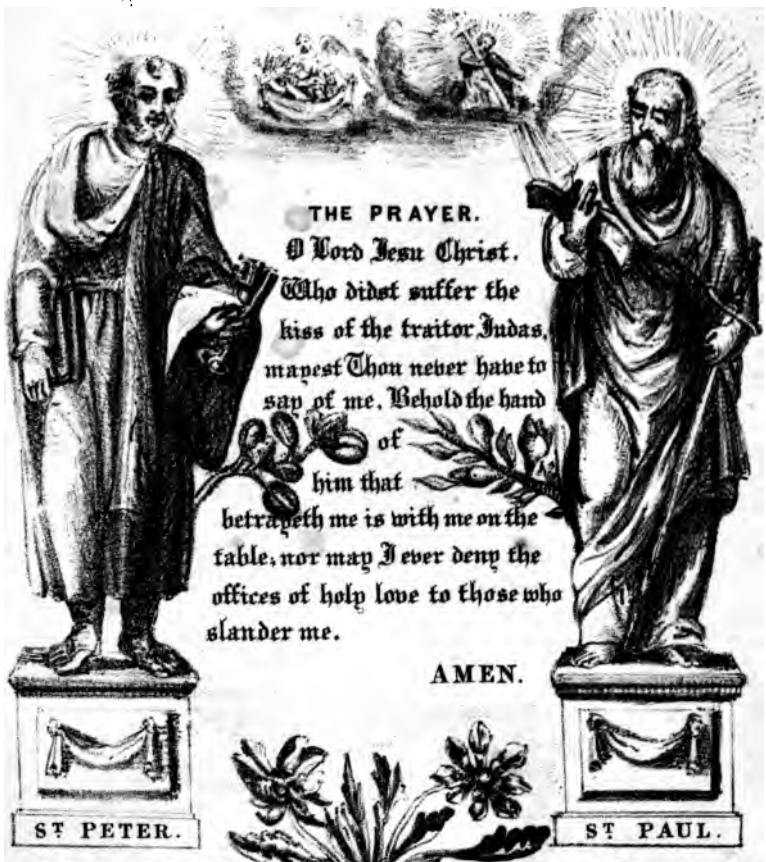
6.

"Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none."

Thus hast Thou from Thy Father's bosom come
  To empty all Thy glories, and from sight
  Of Thine own Godhead every drop of light
Shut out, to take on Thee a sinner's doom!
No star of light amid the o'erwhelming gloom;
  Save when upon the blackness of that night,
Which compass'd Thee as with a living tomb,
  One little streak grew brighter and more bright,
An angel's wing, like one soft crystal spar
Of light from heaven. But now that gentle star
Is scared and fled, for up the steep afar
  There gleam sulphureous torches lit from hell:
  The lights in heaven are all invisible,
  And rising Moon withdraws into her cell.

Christ turns to meet His enemies.

The Priest turns from the Altar to the People.



O Lord, Who didst confer on Thy blessed Apostle Saint Peter the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, with power to bind and to loose, Grant that, continuing in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, we may be released from the bonds of our sins, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

O God, Who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle St Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world, Grant, we beseech Thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew forth our thankfulness unto Thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught, through Jesus Christ &c.

IV.

THE KISS OF JUDAS.

1.

"First be reconciled to thy brother."

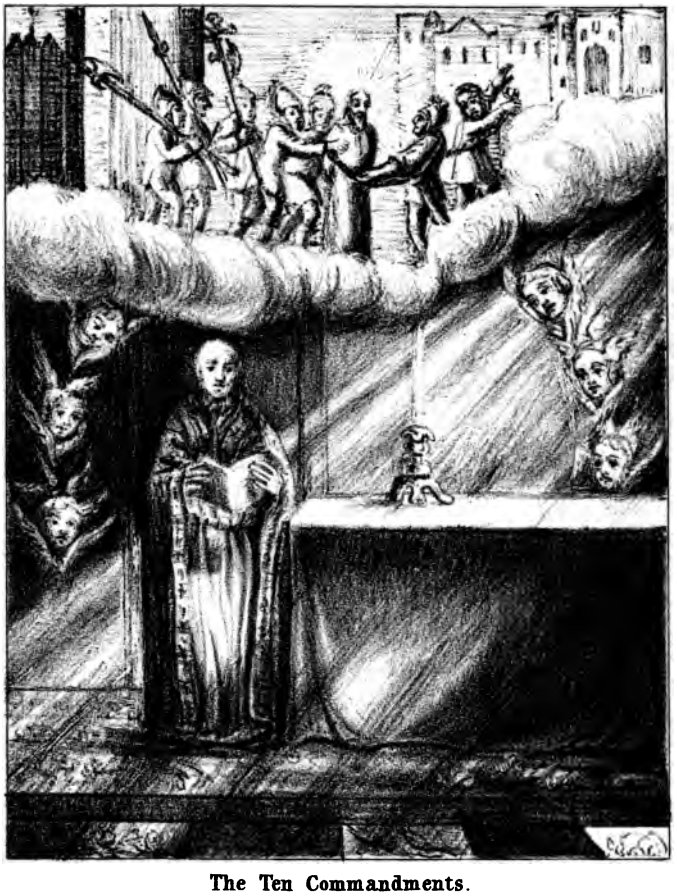
And now, from pleading with Thy God above,
  To us who caus'd Thy death, resign'd to die,
  Thou turnest, veiling all Thy majesty
That we may come to Thee; with words that prove,
Or tender offices that fain would move
  Affectionate returns, and bring us nigh.
  Let not this day of Thy humility
Tempt us to tread beneath our feet Thy love;
  But if Thou to Thy Table wilt receive,
  Let nought within us Thy good Spirit grieve;
But wash us clean as guests to sit with Thee;
Grant us the nuptial robe of Charity,
  And feet with holy preparation shod,
  Lest we for Esau's portion sell our God.

6.

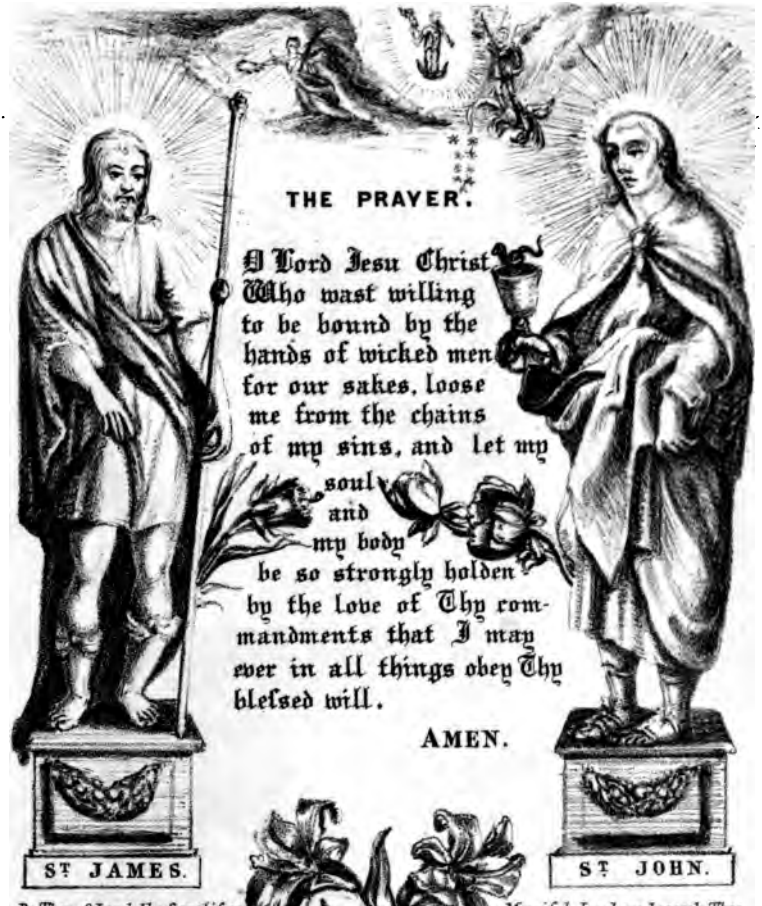
"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

True Love, which hopeth all things, all things beareth,
  Fairest of all that have walked forth on earth,
  And left the calm of heaven where she had birth,
Humility's first-born,—for she appeareth
Like Mercy's self, what time from heaven she heareth
  Repentance's meek prayer, and leaneth down.
  Of all the graces origin and crown;—
True love of God, which loving ever feareth,
  So feareth that she feareth nought beside
  With that fear which hath torment. Of the Bride
Bright robe, and image of the Father's love;
  As when within some little watery sheen
Dwells the reflection of the heavens above,
  And the Moon walks the cloudless deep serene.

Christ led bound by the Jews.



The Ten Commandments.



Be Thou, O Lord, the Sanctifier and Guide of Thy faithful people, that following the holy conversation of Thine Apostle St James, they may ever serve Thee with a quiet mind, through our Lord Jesus Christ Who ever liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

Merciful Lord, we beseech Thee to cast Thy bright beams of light upon Thy Church, that it being enlightened by the doctrine of Thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist St John, may so walk in the light of Thy truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

V.

CHRIST IN BONDS.

1.

"Mine enemies are driven back; they shall fall and perish at Thy presence."

THE quiet night, wherein no sound was heard
  Save that meek prayer to sorrow reconciled,
  To sounds discordant wakes, and tumult wild
Of banded foes approaching: Night's lone bird,
By lantern, torch, and noise unwonted stirr'd,
  Flaps overhead his wing, with movement mild,
  Yet terror strikes in souls by guilt defil'd;
The power of darkness reigns; fears long interr'd
  Rise up and walk the gloom: His words have thrill'd
To hearts which no misgiving knew before;
  A spell unspeakable hath all things still'd,
  And unimagined awfulness hath fill'd:
Those words have power to stop the ocean's roar,
And wake the dead that they shall sleep no more.

2.

"The Breath of our nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits."

A momentary terror seem'd to steep
  Their senses, and a felt unearthly power
  Before their lowly Victim made them cower—
Like pause that ushers in the thunders deep.
But now the spirits of darkness o'er them lower,
  And turn their tongues to triumph, as they creep
  Nigh to the city's gates, which guilty sleep
Stills to false slumbers in its destined hour.
  Now gibe they cast, and scoff, and blasphemy
On the Divinest Stranger. He doth yield
  To rudest violence His harmless Head,
  Like a defenceless Lamb to slaughter led,
That He may o'er us cast His sheltering shield,
  And from nocturnal terrors set us free.

3.

"Thou hast led captivity captive."

Thou art thus captive led our hearts to move,
  And draw us unto Thee, that we our hands
  May yield, and on our necks put Thy love-bands;
For Thy commandments thus as cords may prove
To lead us to that city's gates above,—
  That city which is paved with Thy commands,
  The gold and agate of celestial lands.
For heaviest chains are render'd light by love;
  And therefore art Thou thus all rudely bound,
That we may in our bonds remember Thee;
  And Thee remembering, ever may be found
Thy willing captives rather than be free
  With the bad world—the fuller to abound
In Thy blest gift of heavenly liberty.

4.

"The year of My redeemed is come."

O wonderful fulfilment! is this He
  Who comes down to announce th' eternal year[1]
  Of our release, to liberate from fear,
To ope the gates and set the prisoner free,
And is Himself our very Jubilee;
  Yet thus as some bruised Captive doth appear,
  As one weighed by oppression most severe,
And needing all the power of liberty!
  Thus He Himself, O wondrous sight! is found
  With darkness and with chains encompass'd round,
  Who comes to pour the light on blinded eyes.
  Yet thus it is He brings to earth the skies,
  That wheresoe'er a prisoner now remains
  He may be with him in his silent chains.

5.

"If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed."

Yes, in the eyes of false-discerning men
  A helpless captive, but meanwhile His own,
  To whom th' Almighty Father hath made known
The mysteries of things that are unseen,
Beholding Him with undisturbed ken
  Discern their God, come down from His high throne
  To teach us one great lesson—one alone—
"Learn thou of Me, for I am meek," and then
  Thou shalt, 'mid troubles, find thy spirit's rest.
Think of no other freedom but the mind
To her deservings patiently resign'd:
  And thou shalt find His Godhead manifest,
  Until the weight of sorrows makes thee blest,
Injurious provocations render kind.

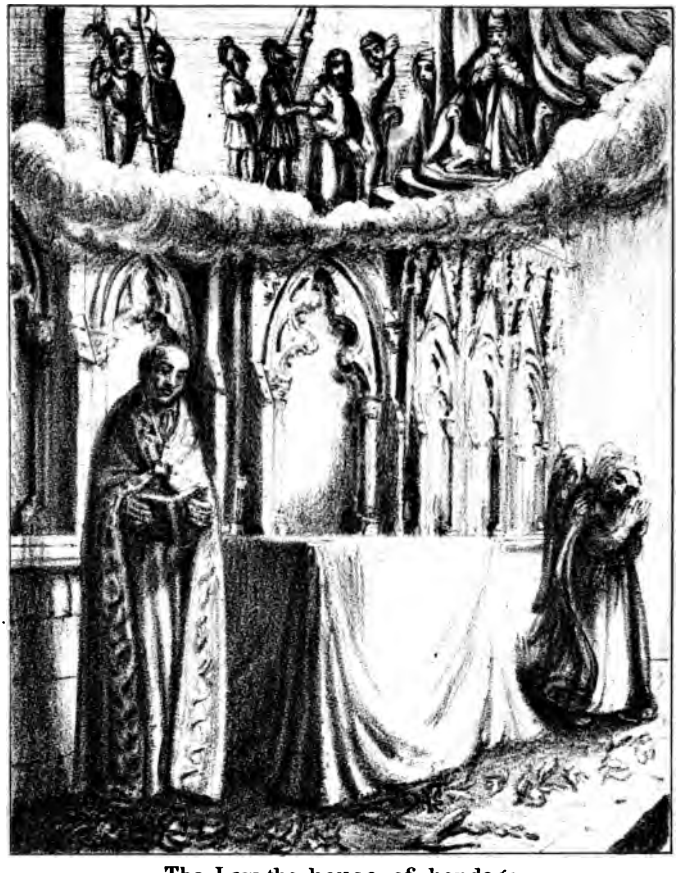
[1] St. Luke iv. 21.

6.

"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night."

And yet while I do thus in bonds behold
  My Maker and my Judge all lowly bent,
  And see in Him the Great Omnipotent,
Thus bowed to bring us back unto the fold,
My sorrow is unmoved, my heart is cold,—
  No stern repentance hath my bosom rent;
  My tears long since are dried, my feelings spent,
As at a tale of this world often told.
  But if I grieve at this my want of grief,
  Thou wilt unto those sorrows bring relief
Which are from want of sorrow, and again
Kindle within my heart that living pain,—
  Yearnings of penitential sad belief,
Which ever on my spirit may remain.

Christ in the house of Annas.



The Law the house of bondage.

THE PRAYER.
O Lord Jesu Christ, Who wast taken as a criminal into the house of Annas, pour Thy grace into my heart, that I may not be allured by the evil one into sin, but may be led by Thy Holy Spirit unto every thing that is well pleasing unto Thee.
AMEN.
St ANDREW.
St THOMAS.
O God, Who gavest thy blessed Apostle St Andrew to become a Preacher and Ruler in Thy Church, we humbly beseech Thy Majesty, that we also may ever obey Thy call in holy obedience; through our Lord Jesus Christ &c.
Grant, O Lord, we pray Thee, that as we hold in memory Thy blessed Apostle St Thomas, so we may follow him by shewing forth devout affection according to our faith; through our Lord Jesus Christ &c.

VI.

THE HOUSE OF ANNAS.

1.

"By the blood of Thy covenant I have sent forth Thy prisoner out of the pit wherein is no water."

And now to make Thy bondage more secure,
  They take Thee in triumphant mockery
  Unto the house of Annas, standing by,
Bandying from place to place with hands impure,
To render condemnation doubly sure,
  Far from all human help, and heap on high
  The gathering load of that night's misery.
Yet Thou didst willingly those chains endure
  Upon Thy spotless Body in Thy love,
  If only Thou might'st so our ransom prove,
When we before the accuser shall be brought,
Silent as criminals and pleading naught
But the great ransom Thou for us hast wrought,
  And the returns of love which in us move.

2.

"Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

For love of Thee is our true liberty;
  And when we rightly love Thee and adore,
  Thy law is then captivity no more,
But gladsome service most divinely free,
In perfect freedom, like the ministry
  Of those in Heaven who are for ever bound
  By blissful adoration most profound,
And know no other joy but serving Thee.
  For then their freedom is indeed divine,
  When doing their own will they follow Thine.
  Thus Thy law is no bondage when within
  Is love that giveth life; chains wrought by sin
  Then vanish as the ice before the sun,
  And full of glowing life the waters run.

3.

"Whoso committeth sin is the servant of sin."

But more and more those iron bonds increase,
  When, setting Thy commandments all at naught,
  In the imaginings of our own thought
We follow our own will, nor seek release.
Then if upbraidings of Thy Spirit cease,
  'Tis that those fetters grow into the soul,
  Part of ourselves, infect our being whole;
Those chains become ourselves—we are at peace.
  Then by those bonds which Thou for us didst wear,
  And by the blows which Thou for us didst bear,—
  When as some blood-stain'd, night-caught criminal
  Within that house of bondage set in thrall,
  Before that Pharaoh our Redemption stood,—
  Save me from that Egyptian servitude.

4.

"And the servant abideth not in the house for ever."

Thy law hath bound me with a living band,
  And in the dead of night, when all is still,
  E'en like a thief, with footsteps dark and chill,
The great accuser shall before me stand,
And lift against me the upbraiding hand
  In presence of the Judge; then vain the skill
  That ever waits upon the tortuous will,
With ready self-deceivings at command,
  To extricate, excuse, and to explain.
  Nay, 'tis our will itself which is the chain
  That binds us hand and foot, and doth remain
Drawing us, while we think not, to the gloom,
Till bondage doth itself become our home,
And thwarted will our everlasting doom.

5.

"I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore Mine own Arm brought salvation."

I gaze, and gazing tremble at the sight,
  To see Thee, Who dost sit at God's right hand,
  Bound by an impious rabble, thus to stand
Before Thy creature! Yet 'twas Thou this night,
In love and lowliness most infinite,
  Didst kneel, to teach us this, love's last command,
  And therefore now to Thee compulsion's band,
So grievous, is for our sakes sweet and light.
  O strange fulfilment of the truths enroll'd
  In scrolls of Prophets, and set forth of old
  Through imaged types and shadows manifold.
Now these are set apart. Thyself I see
The mirror made of perfect liberty,
Thyself the living Type that teachest me.

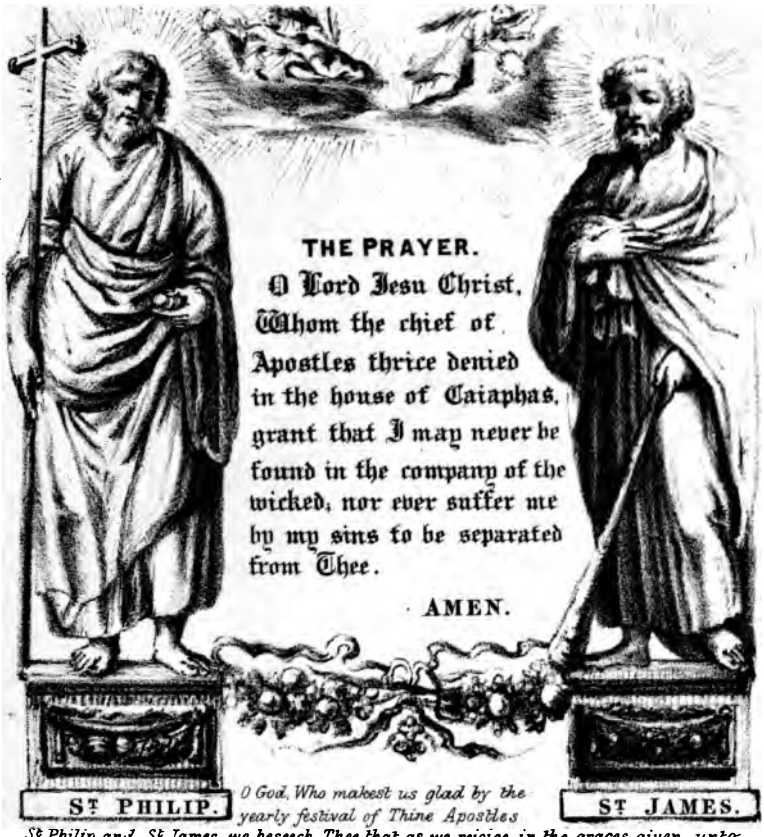
6.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

What is the lesson which these sights impart?
  That there are bonds to man invisible
  Framèd in Heaven, which have a mighty spell
To hold by secret influential art
Him Who was God and Man,—to bind the heart
  With meek obedience, such as none can tell;—
  Those chains are love—are love invincible,
Which from God's Altar suffer not to start,
  Stronger than death, the love of wretched men.
Love was the bond that bound Thee from above,
  Submissive e'en to death; oh, wilt Thou then
But kindle in our hearts this, Thine own love,
That it an adamantine chain may prove,
  Nor suffer us from Thee to fall again.

Christ denied by St Peter.

"Lord, have mercy upon us."



O God, Who makest us glad by the yearly festival of Thine Apostles St Philip and St James, we beseech Thee that as we rejoice in the graces given unto them, so by their examples we may be instructed, through our Lord &c.

VII.

THE FALL OF ST. PETER.

1.

"I have heard the blasphemy of the multitude, and fear is on every side.'

HIGH in the dim recess of that dark hall
  The midnight conclave now before me pass,
  Gathering around the impious Caiaphas.
Our God, Whose Word upholds this worldly ball,
Whose Presence doth Angelic hosts appal,
  Stands bound; and now the rude insulting mass
  Press on Him! Now, O dreadful sight, alas!
The uplifted hand of the rough menial
  Strikes on the Mouth Divine that meekly spoke
  (The healèd slave from Edom gave the stroke),
  The hand against its Maker! Now I see
  Earnest appeals, judicial mockery,
  And gratulations at successful ill,
  While lights more dim the noisy conclave fill.

2.

"I looked also upon My right hand, and saw there was no man that would know Me."

Now in that corner of the vaulted dome
  One soul of evil all the hearts doth stir;
  They jeer and beat the holy Prisoner,
With mockeries and jests around Him come,
Mantling in scorn that Face which doth illume
  The Heaven of Heavens. Now one pollutes His ear,
  Another with injurious blows draws near.
But there is that which to His heart comes home
  With sorer bitterness than jests so rude
  And impious blows of that fierce multitude:
  Amid the vassal courts and hall below
  The dearly lovèd of His soul e'en now,
  His own most dearly lovèd, hath forgot
  His Master's very Name—he knows Him not.

3.

"How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!"

How terrible the night that broods around,
  That we should e'er forget our Present God!
  They who with Him the ways of sorrow trod,
Have been with Him in Tabor, and abound
With signs of love, with countless favours crown'd,
  With whom He hath ta'en up His own abode,
  Who companied with Him along the road,
And with Him were in season more profound;
  They who had all things for His sake resign'd—
Home, friends, and calling—for a martyr's wreath,
And boast of faithfulness to chains and death,
  In high resolves and protestations blind,—
When they forget to pray, one little breath
  Blows all away, like leaves before the wind.

4.

"The precious sons of Zion, compared to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers!"

Like some frail reed, which in the pale moonlight
  Bows down, then broken hangs upon the ground;
  Like some ice-scene with golden sunbeams crown'd,
Which vanishes before mid-day grows bright;
Or like the sea, so beautiful to sight,
  Basking in sunlight, till a cloud profound
  Doth all the glittering scene with gloom surround;
Or when the autumnal frost of one brief night
  Strips some fair tree, and leaves it bleak and bare,
Robb'd of a whole year's pride and leafy state;
  Or when upon a full-orb'd summer noon
  Comes in eclipse the intervening moon;—
  So our best feelings cherish'd long and fair
One hour of darkness may lay desolate.

5.

"Then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

And who shall stand the trial when the rock
  Is shaken? We whose strongest purposes
  Are but as webs to catch the summer flies,
Which the bat's wing beats down, the owlets mock,
Or light as gossamers that hold the flock
  Of stationary sunbeams, which the breeze
  Plays with,—yes, we that float our flags at ease
And softness, what shall we do in the shock,
When principalities have on us broke
  In their own hour of darkness—what shall we?
Lord, let us not Thy Hand in that dark day
Forego, nor midnight Voice which calls to pray;—
So when the storm shivers the forest oak,
  May we our poor frail branches hang on Thee.

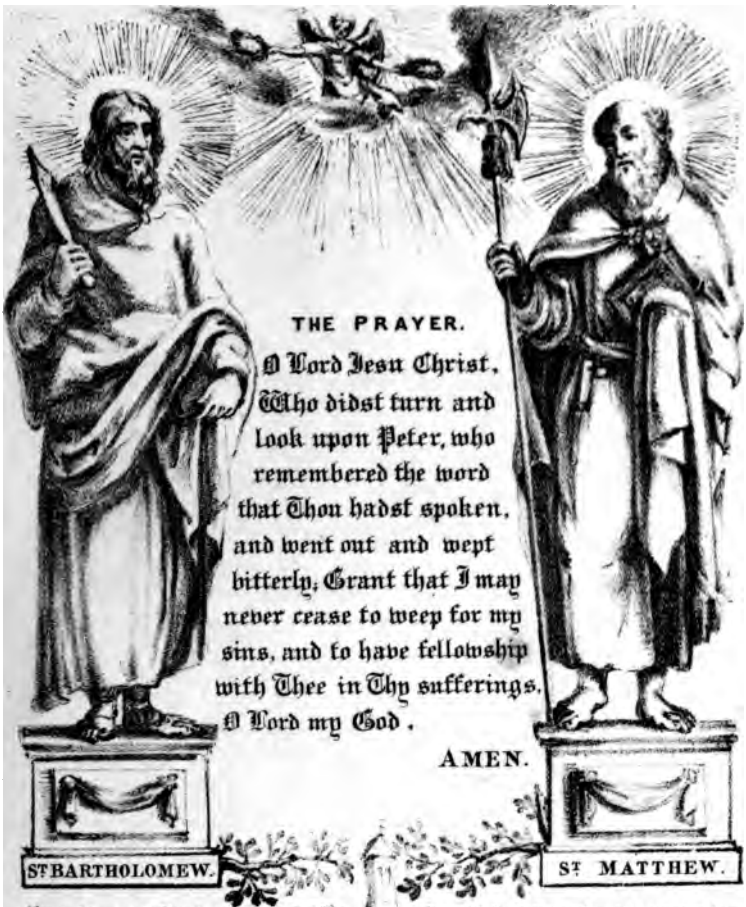
6.

"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord."

Oft since that hour until the end e'en now,
  While in the raised-apart and sacred shrine
  The dread memorials of His Love Divine
Are offered up for us, there is below
One who hath ventured to His courts to go,
  In whom His Omnipresent Eye descries
  A heart that secretly his Lord denies,
In self-deceiving thoughts and fears that bow
  Before the multitude; who hears God's law,
  While influences of men with present awe
O'erwhelm him; and content to be as they,
  Forgets the lesson which the Garden taught,
  And higher stern resolves before him brought,
Nor schools his heart aright to watch and pray.

St. Peter looking to Christ.

The Priest turns again to the Altar.



Almighty and Everlasting God, Who hast given unto us a solemn and religious joy on this day of Thy blessed Apostle St Bartholomew, grant, we pray Thee, unto Thy Church to love that which he believed and to preach that which he taught, through our Lord &c.

Grant, O God, that after the example of Thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist St Matthew, we also through Thy grace may be able to do that which, though it be impossible with men, yet is possible with God, through Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord &c.

VIII.

THE PENITENT RESTORED.

1.

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them."

In holy silence most adorable
  Stands the meek Lamb of God, and not a sound
  Escapes His lips in sacred sorrow bound,
"With grief acquainted." What though words may tell
Of pains and griefs which at death's portal dwell,
  Yet who shall speak the secret flowing wound
  When love itself in hour of need is found
Unfaithful?—in the heart unspeakable
Dwells the unstaunchèd wound and bleeds within,
  Deep in the soul that lean'd on its own love.
  E'en so Thy Spirit did Thy Prophets move
Whene'er Thy chosen children in their sin
  Deny Thee;—ever grieving through all times
  "The Man of Sorrows" o'er His children's crimes.[1]

[1] Jer. xiii. 17; xxxi. 18, 20.

2.

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Lord, are we in that tender heart so near
  And dear to Thee? Thou knowest long before
  Our very thoughts; our words are counted o'er
Before they rise, and on our tongues made clear
Unto ourselves and others they appear.
  For our affections are the very store
  That Thou wouldst treasure up; and evermore
Close to our countenance Thine Eye and Ear
Is listening for our words, to us unknown.
  Oh, let me ne'er amid the wicked stand,
Forgetting vows I made with Thee alone;
  But if surrounded by the impious band,
Fill'd with the thoughts of Thy Gethsemane,
Let me forget myself—remember Thee!

3.

"He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out, so that rivers ran in the dry places."

Then often from that silence, long conceal'd,
  In awe beyond all utterance most keen,
  Thine Eye turns on us; Satan then is seen
Departing; all his crafts at once reveal'd,
When he hath gain'd his end, and sin hath seal'd
  Our disobedience: then breaks forth between
  The love of our dear Lord, which long hath been
Watching, and yet so oft in vain appeal'd
  To earnest vow and promise vainly spent.
  Then by His rod the smitten rock is rent,
  And suddenly the waters pour apace
  From the deep hidden fountains of His Grace,
  To freshen the dry wilderness within,
  Parch'd by the fiery blast that pass'd in sin.

4.

"My sin is ever before me."

The Rock is smitten, and the water flows,
  And ne'er shall cease to flow; but whensoe'er
  That warning cock shall reach his wakeful ear,
That Eye again shall meet him 'mid Its woes,
And all that scene anew around him close,—
  The midnight hall—the maiden drawing near—
  The dread suspense—the agonising fear—
The scoffers' noise and scorn—and the repose
Of that recalling Eye upon him cast
With tender reminiscence of the past,—
  With meek reproving, yet forgiving glance,
  Upon him turn'd with speechless utterance,—
  Then all afresh, with unabated force,
  Open'd the silent flood-gates of remorse.

5.

"Turn us again, O God; shew the light of Thy countenance, and we shall be whole."

Whene'er he heard the cock crow Peter wept;
  Again to his forgotten Lord he turn'd,
  And all anew his old affections burn'd,
And penitential sorrows o'er him crept
With thrilling visions, which, whene'er he slept,
  Woke him again to prayer. Oh, lesson learn'd
  Not dearly, at whatever cost discern'd!
Oh, should temptation from us intercept
  Thy loving Countenance, yet whensoe'er
We turn again and to Thine Altar flee
  From our own sins and from the world, oh, there
  Lift on our hearts Thy gracious look Divine,
That we, returning to ourselves and Thee,
  May wet with tears the pavement of Thy shrine.

6.

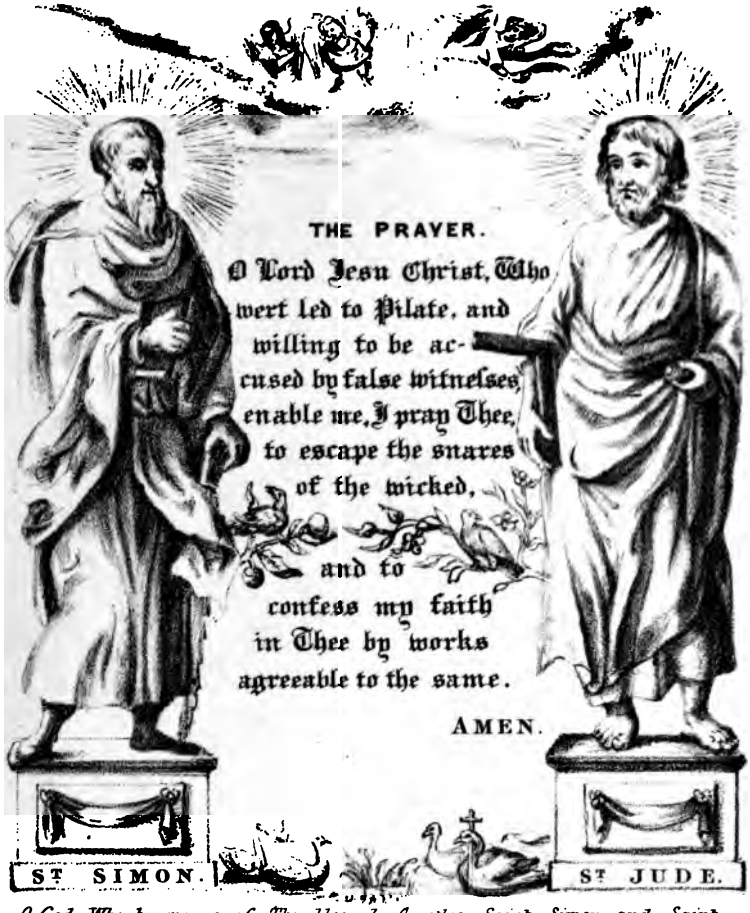
"When my heart is in heaviness I will think upon God."

Flow forth, flow forth, ye drops of holy brine,
  And wash away the taints which else remain
  Indelible in power or guilty pain.
That Eye which doth in pity now incline
Will blend Its tears, and blending give to thine
  A power to wash away the deepest stain,
  And turn the bitter brine to healthful rain.
Then from dry ground shall spring the Root Divine;[1]
  But when our eyes meet Thine, oh, then no less
Be with us, Lord, sustain us and control,
Lest in that wakening of the sinful soul,
In sense of our bereavement, to the ground
We sink again in sorrow, and be drown'd
  E'en in the flood of our own bitterness.

[1] Isaiah liii. 2.

Christ before Pilate.

Prayer for the King.



O God, Who by means of Thy blessed Apostles Saint Simon and Saint Jude hast vouchsafed to lead us to the knowledge of Thy Name, Grant that by our profiting thereby we may advance their eternal glory, and in glorifying them may advance our own salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ &c.

IX.

PILATE'S JUDGMENT-HALL.

1.

"By Me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth."

LORD, if the wicked are "a sword of Thine,"
  And princes do not "bear the sword in vain,"
  When, as Thy delegates, on earth they reign;
And hearts of kings are in Thy Hand Divine,
Which Thou as streams of water dost incline,
  To fertilise, to freshen and sustain,
  Or to destroy: then by this patient chain
To which Thou didst in love Thyself resign,
  When Thou with downcast eyes and back-bound hand
  Before the potentates of earth didst stand;—
Teach us beneath the oppressive powers of ill
Thy chastening rod to see, and so be still;
  Loving that Church which bears Thy sign of scorn,
  Nor conquers but when she that Cross hath borne.

2.

"When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

When for the sins of Thine own Israel
  Nebuchadnezzar sits upon the throne,
  And holds her in the chains of Babylon,
He with His children in the fires shall dwell
Who now, to human eyes made visible,
  Stands before Pilate;—to them shall be known,
  Walk with them, and shall claim them for His own.
As here on earth, when conflagrations swell,
Heaven's winds rush down, and are around them brought,
  So in the kingdom of Thy grace below,
  When fires of persecution round us grow,
Thy Spirit, like a moist and freshening wind,
Comes to be with us in the viewless mind,
  With visitations of refreshing thought.

3.

"It was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these."

The eagle doth a twofold emblem prove,
  The advancing emblem of imperial state,—
  The abomination which makes desolate,—
Or soaring gentle as the household dove,
The very image of celestial love,
  The Royal sign of the regenerate.
E'en so the kingly Unction from above
  Sometimes the inner reins doth penetrate
With the Anointing of the King of kings,
  Setting the standard of the Cross therein,
As kingly David when of Saul pursued;
  Sometimes for chastening of Thy people's sin,
God's minister of wrath to sight it brings,
  As Saul's ambitious hate and fortitude.

4.

"If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight."

But whensoe'er the kings that bear Thy trust,
  Thy Cross more dear than their own sceptre hold;
  And, 'neath the shining purple and the gold,
Sackcloth put on, and penitential dust:
The world's mysterious hate against the just
  Shrinks from that light; allegiance first grows cold,
  And then, in ways most strange and manifold,
The many-handed monster in his lust
  His multitudinous sides again shall shake,
And cast them to the ground, and there in hate
  Their crown and sceptre 'neath his feet shall break;
  And therefore Thy true kingdom here below
From Thine own Cross shall ne'er be separate,
  But find its strength in that dread sign of woe.

5.

"I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine."

What though His endless reign spreads forth below,
  'Tis "as it were in secret" and unknown,
  E'en as Himself, when friendless and alone,
Before the heathen Pilate thus made low.
  His kingdom is the Truth, and they who know
The Truth shall find their way unto His throne,
Entering that City's gates. And He shall own
  Their due allegiance. Where He reigns e'en now
On this bad earth His kingdom is true peace,
  Order, and harmony, and blessed love,
  For ever manifold yet ever one,
  One King, one Kingdom; clothed with the sun,
His kingdom with His knowledge doth increase,
  Till both are in fruition lost above.

6.

"The throne of God and of the Lamb."

Thy kingdom is release from death and sin,
  From the heartburnings and the fear and strife;
  For the Lamb's Blood, which speaks of endless life,
Is on the door by which we enter in,
Beats in the heart when true life doth begin;
  Fills all the veins; each grace which there is rife
  Speaks of that Blood; the Church is but the Wife
Of the meek Lamb,—the Bride His Blood doth win.
  'Tis the slain Lamb that sits upon the throne:
  Therefore no place is in that kingdom known
For pride's disquiet, and ambition's pains;
It is the Lamb Himself that all sustains;
  All there, in all things, at all seasons own
The love and meekness of *the Lamb that reigns.*

Christ sent from Pilate to Herod.

The Priest on the Epistle side of the Altar.

THE PRAYER.

O Lord Jesu Christ who when Thou wast standing before Herod, didst answer nothing to the false charges which they brought against Thee, grant me such strength, that I may courageously endure the reproaches of them that slander me, nor ever reveal Thy holy things to the unworthy.

AMEN.

St MATTHIAS.

O God, who didst receive the blessed Matthias into the fellowship of Thine Apostles, grant, we beseech Thee that we also may ever experience the bowels of Thy compassion towards us through our Lord &c.

St BARNABAS.

O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of Thy holy Apostle Barnabas, mercifully vouchsafe that by the gifts of Thy grace we may not fall short of those benefits which by him Thou hast bestowed on us through our Lord &c.

X.

CHRIST BEFORE HEROD.

1.

"They have cast their heads together with one consent; and are confederate against thee; the tabernacles of the Edomites."

SENT from that heathen judgment-hall of woe,
They now in mockery rude their Victim bring
Before the subtle Galilean king;
While through the streets they hurry to and fro,
Now throng behind, and now before Him go,
In hate successful, loud, and triumphing;
As some poor death-bound prince, or captive thing,
Forced through Rome's streets before his last death-blow;
Or sacrificial beast, amid the throng
To some old heathen altar urged along;
Or as fierce dogs hunt down the gentle hare,
From place to place, loud yelling for its blood;—
The Pharisees their Victim have pursued;
Lo, in the kingly palace, they are there.

2.

"If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Steep'd in the murder'd Baptist's holy blood
  Sits the incestuous and adulterous chief,
  Well pleased to view the Saviour in His grief,
Hoping to see some miracle of good.
Oh, strange infatuation which withstood
  The strivings of the Spirit! Oh, how brief
  The day of our salvation and relief,
Ere tenfold night doth on the senses brood,
  Close up the eye and ear, and case the heart
In thick-ribbed iron! Pharaoh-like, to see
  Signs to the Almighty Presence which belong,
As of some sportive juggler at his art,
  And yet himself unscathed to sit among
The lightnings of Incarnate Deity!

3.

"But He answered him nothing."

Silence most eloquent, beneath the sound
  Of earthly things, with current deep and strong,
  Doth like a hidden ocean move along;
What silent retributions do abound!
What silent intercessions all around!
  Time silent steals, in memory keeps the wrong,
  And then puts forth his hand amid the throng.
Our God disown'd, our King with shame is crown'd,
  And in that robe is made the scorn of men:
The sun shall see a Herod in his might
Spangled in that same silver robe of light,[1]
  And men aloud declare him God, and then
The Angel's hand shall smite his royal form,
Mark'd as the prey of the devouring worm.

[1] Acts xii. 21: "Arrayed in royal apparel." "A robe made all of silver tissue. As the sun was then rising, the rays made it shine."—*Josephus.*

4.

"I am the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my Love."

Behold the lilies of the vernal field;
For Solomon was ne'er arrayed so bright,
In all his tissued robe of silver light,
As one of these, to thoughtful eyes reveal'd.
The microscope will shew their crystal shield,
All studded with fair pearls and crysolite,
And purple veins that track the virgin white,—
A beauteous world from our gross eyes conceal'd.
That glittering robe of kingly Solomon
By this false Idumean is put on:
But fairer than the glory of the flower
Was Christ's white robe of spotless innocence,
Worn in His bleeding Passion's darkest hour,
Too brilliant for the eye of mortal sense.

5.

"They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple."

Thence the white robes of all-prevailing prayer,
Through all her courts shall to His Church descend,
Multiplied at her shrines unto the end,—
Numberless as the stars on the dark air
Come forth, and the departed sun-light share.
That robe a silent language doth attend,
And speechless intercession seems to wear,
As representing Him who stood our Friend
Before the king of terrors. At that day,
In plenitude of His almighty sway,
Whate'er things Him approach'd, hate, jest, or chance,
Put on themselves divine significance;
E'en as the setting sun, of clouds brought nigh,
Makes to himself a glorious pageantry.

6.

"God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."

By mockery cloth'd in that white garb of scorn
  Stood our Great Sacrifice for us to plead,
  And to our God in silence intercede,
And solitude; and what if thus forlorn
In all His courts that snowy vest is worn,[1]
  Pleading, alas, for them who little heed,
  Mid enemies who know not their great need,
As Christ Himself upon that holy morn.
  That lifting up of hands may still avail,
As on the mount apart, when Israel fought,
  Moses, sustained by Sacerdotal power,
Outstretch'd his arms in silence, and thence brought
  A power to Israel in that destined hour,
With lifting up of hands to win or fail.

[1] "Since that accident to our Lord, the Church hath not indecently chosen to clothe her priests with albs, or white garments; and it is a symbolical intimation and representment of that part of the passion and affront which Herod passed upon the holy Jesus: and this is so far from deserving a reproof, that it were to be wished all the children of the Church would imitate all those graces which Christ exercised when He wore that garment, which she hath taken up in ceremony and thankful memory."—Jer. Taylor, *Life of Christ*.

Christ sent back to Pilate.

The North or Gospel side of the Altar.

O God, Who hast bestowed such excellent grace on Thy blessed Evangelist Saint Mark in the setting forth of Thy Gospel, vouchsafe unto us, we pray Thee, ever to make progress in the knowledge of Thy Word; through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray Thee, O Lord, that we may ever be instructed and benefitted by Thy holy Evangelist Saint Luke, who cheerfully bore about in his body the mortification of the Cross to the honor of Thy great name; through our Lord Jesus Christ.

XI.

PILATE AND HEROD RECONCILED.

1.

" The fierceness of man shall turn to Thy praise."

HEROD and Pilate are made friends to-day,
  And Jew and Gentile are together met,
  By unseen hands the Corner-stone is set,
Both walls to one are tending now their way ;
For evil spirits His behests obey,
  And work His will, caught in their own strange net,
  While they confederate foes with malice whet
Against Incarnate Goodness. Thus they lay
  In Sion the chief Corner-stone, with blood
Cemented, and made firm and ratified
  By voice of the infatuate multitude.
All are united now with one accord,
  All in one headlong purpose are allied
Against the Lord of life, the living Word.

2.

"Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done."

Gentile and Jew, and Scribe and Sadducee,
People, and priests, and kings are now made one,
By malice brought to wondrous union,
Mock counterfeit of holy charity;
Such power hath truth divine, that things we see
Catch at its likeness, in its impress run,
Shadows on earth of the celestial sun:
As when in spreading tribes at enmity,
Ishmael, and Edomite, and Hagarene,
Midian, and Amalek, there soon was seen
The sire of many nations: swift they sprung
From that great prophecy which yet was young,
Like sands on the sea-shore, in forecaste given
Of Christian nations like the stars of heaven.

3.

"Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!"

Thus is the Gospel as a sword on earth,
Kindling division more inveterate
Than in aught else is known of human hate:
Pride, lust, wrath, envy, sadness, impious mirth,
Which in our hearts' dark ruins have their birth,
In ways most manifold and intricate
Combine against the Light, else separate.
Yet Truth the while in its own household hearth
Shines, amid foes its standard onward beareth,
And ne'er but by itself is overcome,
When trampled most, victorious most appeareth,
Outcast and hated through the world to roam,
Seeking in every heart to make its home;
Whatever cannot love the heavenly Guest it feareth.

4.

"Though they curse, yet bless thou."

To Pilate's judgment-hall again returned,
With sorer woes oppress'd, and bearing still
At each remove a heavier weight of ill,
From place to place His love more brightly burn'd,
At each remove His patience was discern'd.
While evil winds turn'd not His stedfast will,
Whose flame burnt upward, but its rising fill,
Till He the length and breadth and depth hath learn'd
Of human bitterness. Of ills they pour
Full measure pressèd down and running o'er
Into His bosom, which He doth restore
To them again steep'd in His precious Blood;
While Satan's darts, by patient love withstood,
Are by Him made to work eternal good.

5.

"O My people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against Me."

Thus driven from place to place, He makes appeal
From judgment unto judgment in all eyes,
In judgment stands before all enemies,
Crying aloud, each hidden thing reveal,
Bring forth your reasons, nothing to conceal,
Let wicked men and spirits now arise,
One Woman-born your enmity defies,
Else on His innocence ye set your seal.
Ye in like manner shall before Him stand,
Each, one by one, stand as a criminal,
And make appeal in the great judgment-hall
Of men and angels; all things now at hand
Shall onward pass to the eternal strand
Where sentence shall be given upon us all.

6.

"If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Would that to Thee we might be liken'd now,
  So we this persecution should obtain,
  And turn obtain'd to our abiding gain ;—
From trial-scene to scene we thus might go,
Gaining in each advantage o'er the foe,
  So unto us each heaven-descended pain
  Might wash away some guilt-contracted stain,
And we our own abasement come to know ;
So more and more may learn how to forgive ;
  And more forgiving, may be more forgiven ;
That more forgiven, we the more may love ;
And loving more, like That we love may prove ;
And liken'd more to Him, in Him may live,
  And find in Him the rest which is of Heaven.

Christ stripped of His clothing.

The Elements uncovered.

THE PRAYER.
O Lord Jesu Christ, Who didst endure to be stripped of Thy garments as a criminal, grant me, I beseech Thee, to shake off the heavy burden of my sins, that, putting on the breastplate of Thy righteousness, I may ever find grace in Thy sight.
AMEN.
St STEPHEN.
St PHILIP.
Grant, Lord, that we may imitate that which we commemorate, and learn to love our enemies, when we hold in memory the birth-day of him, who prayed even for his murderers, to Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, Who ever liveth and reigneth with Thee, ever One God, world without end.
O God, Who dost work wonderfully in the ministration of Thy word and Sacraments, and by Whose power alone the Ethiopian can change his skin, grant that, being made Thy children by adoption, we may ever live in newness of life, through Thy Son Jesus Christ.

XII.

CHRIST STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS.

1.

"As many were astonied at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men"

O THOU, the Fount of all that's fair and good,
  On Whose blest countenance, girt with bright rays,
  Adoring angels and archangels gaze,
And drink unspeakable beatitude;—
Before Thy guilty creatures hast Thou stood
  Thus covered with dishonour; in rude ways
  Reft of that robe which did divinely blaze
On Tabor's heaven-uplifted solitude,
  Which with mysterious healing did abound,
  When virtue went forth through their skirts around
From That Thy sinless Body, which did wear
The sins of all the world; now stripp'd and bare,
  Naked, as erst dishonouring Thy Hand
  Adam in paradise did guilty stand.

2.

"I am in misery, and like unto him that is at the point to die."

Long hast Thou striven since our sad parents' fall
  To veil our nakedness, and sinful shame
  Indelibly imprinted on our frame,
By skins as by a robe funereal,
And offering up of slaughter'd animal,
  And more than all by Thine Almighty Name,
  As by a shield from self-reproaching blame
Against the Accuser: in man's judgment-hall
  Thyself, Who art the God of purity,
  Art naked stripp'd and desolate—for me;
With virginal pure Flesh all trembling there,
And modest Soul than heaven of heavens more fair,
  Shrinking within in speechless agonies,
  A gazing-stock and scorn to cruel eyes.

3.

"If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked."

In this Thy nakedness as of the tomb,
  By Thine unclothing we are clothed upon;
  E'en as Thy dying for us life hath won,
And as Thine exile is to us our home,
So Thine unclothing hath to us become
  Our house from heaven. Unhoused, unclothed, undone,
  Thou hast our nakedness clothed with the sun
Of Thine own brightness; as the clouds which roam
Onward, attendant on the sun's white throne,
  Are in themselves all mist and gloom forlorn,
  Yet clothed in golden radiance not their own
Are made the moving canopies of Heaven,
  Hanging in wreaths around the face of morn,
Or beauteous imagery which is at even.

4.

"He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people" "that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit."

So deeply in our spirits hidden lieth
  The consciousness of this our nakedness,
  Our guilty souls from Heaven's light shrink no less
  Than do our bodies; when the eye would press
Home to its covert, inwardly it sigheth
At thought of its own nakedness, and crieth
  To Him alone that knoweth her distress;
And when her conscious shame the Accuser trieth,
  Can only in His sheltering Bosom hide.
The appliances which from the world we borrow
  Are but the ministrations of our pride,
  To find some hiding-place, and there abide:
But the great Judgment, with an endless sorrow,
Such coverings from the soul shall strip to-morrow.

5.

"Thy rebuke hath broken My heart; I am full of heaviness: I looked for some to have pity on Me, but there was no man."

Thou hadst no sin, but didst in pity take
  The tenderness of those meek souls serene
  That on all brotherly compassions lean,
And when those sympathies of friends forsake,
Soul-stricken feel, as if the heart would break:
  Such love, when by the rude world it is seen,
  Is deem'd all weakness, though its griefs have been
Not for itself, but for its brethren's sake.
Through Psalms and Prophets thus, like the meek Dove,
  His Spirit doth a mourner's heart express,
With images akin to human love.
And thus the Lord, descending from above,
  Clothed Himself with all human tenderness,
  That so His Shadow might our weakness bless.

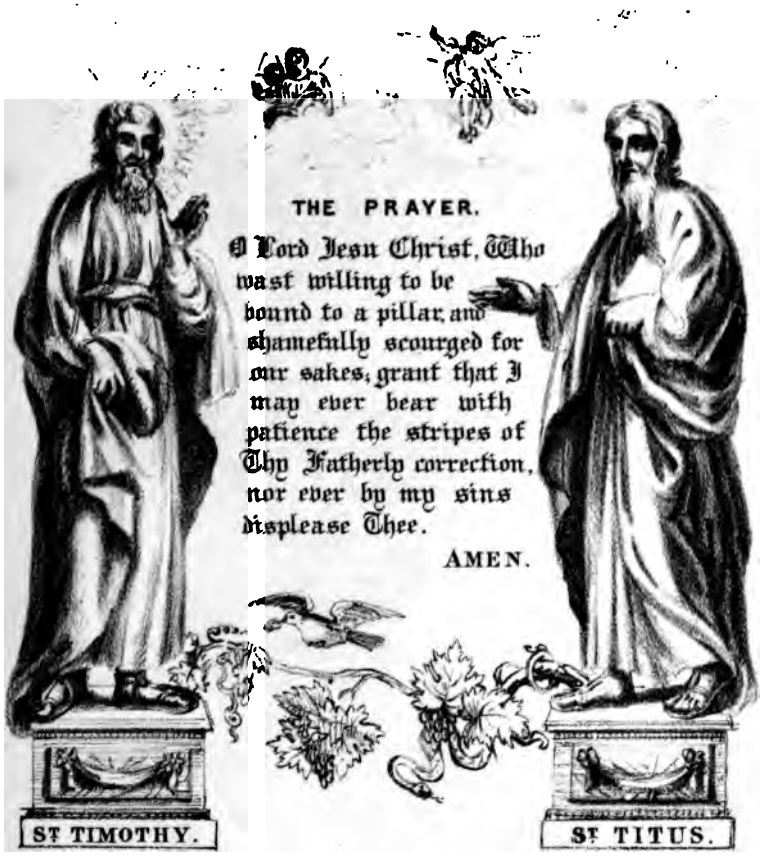
6.

"Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?"

All this for me, that by Thy mercy shriven
  I might in soul and body be made whole,
  That I might open my sin-festering soul
Before him unto whom Thy power is given
To bind and loose, and bear the keys of Heaven,
  Back to its source the gather'd load to roll;
  The soul by running leprosies made foul
To reinstate at pardon-gate, thence driven;
Though face-confusion waits on us before
  One eye, and that in mercy: one pale star
Sits in the twilight at the evening door,
  Whose blush precedes the darkness; better far
Than in the Judgment to unnumber'd eyes,
And the whole court of the assembled skies.

Christ scourged.

The Oblation in silence.



O God, who hast been pleased to preserve a succession of Chief Pastors in Thy Church even unto these ends of the world, grant we pray Thee that such may never be wanting unto us, nor we to them, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost &c.

XIII.

CHRIST SCOURGED.

1.

"Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord."

My Lord and God, I see Thee standing bare,
  Reft of Thy robes, and shuddering at the sight
  Of executioners, that try their might
In mock essays, and rods and cords prepare.
And now the lictor band are entering there;
  The morning throws askant her cold grey light,
  But more and more the while a tenfold night
Possession takes of that dread theatre;
  For Thou, who art the Sun of Righteousness,
  Withdrawest all Thy beams—in sore distress;
As wanton soldiery are closing round,
And evil spirits have their senses drowned
In cruelty;—while, to the pillar bound,
  Thou wait'st the stroke in shivering nakedness.

2.

"By His stripes we are healed."

Such is the offering of Thyself, that we
  May willingly embrace the healing scourge,
  While the rude world mocks at the thoughts that urge
To chastening laws of self-severity.
But what is all this sorrow pour'd on Thee?
  Not that our flesh may from this gloom emerge
  In pamper'd ease; but when she strives to purge
In-dwelling sins by their due penalty,
  Or takes the scourging of a Father's Hand,
She may remember that on Thee were laid
Her heavy burdens, and rejoice when made
  Like unto Thee, Who thus did'st trembling stand,—
May learn there is no health but in the rod
Which hath been borne by our own pitying God.

3.

"There is no whole part in My body. I am feeble and sore smitten."

The scene of blood comes thickening on that morn,
  And now of the loud scourge I hear the sound
  Redoubled, and I see the reddening wound,—
Wound upon wound,—His tender back is torn,
Flower of all human flesh—the Sinless-born;
  The Lily of the Vales that loved the ground,
  Shrinking from view profane, and spotless found;
Now lifted like the rose upon the thorn,
  Which hangs its head beneath the stormy shower;
And ere it sheds in death its dripping leaves,
One purple petal, as it earthward grieves,
  Falls wet with dew from the o'erloaded flower:
So from Thy Body, mingling with Thy tears,
Drops Thy life's-blood, and on the stone appears.

4.

"He bare our griefs, and carried our sorrows."

Thus the Almighty God is prostrate bent
  Beneath the unpitying scourge and soldier throng,
  Yielding those Hands to the fast-binding thong,
Which moulded the o'er-hanging firmament;—
A fainting Victim with sore anguish spent.
  Thus till the day of doom He comes among
  His children's thoughtless ways of mirth or wrong,
Bearing the burden of our punishment,—
  Comes in some attitude of speechless throes
Upon our joys and sorrows to attend;
  Teaching us what alone His Spirit knows,
Our state, our origin, our being's end;
While thus our true and everlasting Friend
  Pleads with us in the silence of His woes.

5.

"By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many."

This from our penal stripes is the reprieve,
  In this oblation they are sanctified;
  The Father reconciled henceforth shall hide
Within His tabernacle those that grieve:
And the Almighty Comforter shall cleave
  To those in suffering unto Him allied:
  That they beneath this shadow may abide,
He scourgeth every son He doth receive.
  In this bad world with leprous taint o'ercast,
  Which to its own corruption fades so fast,
Nothing in the All-seeing Eyes is good,
  Save as the mirror of the Eternal Son,
  When therein is beheld what He hath won,
In images of His atoning Blood.

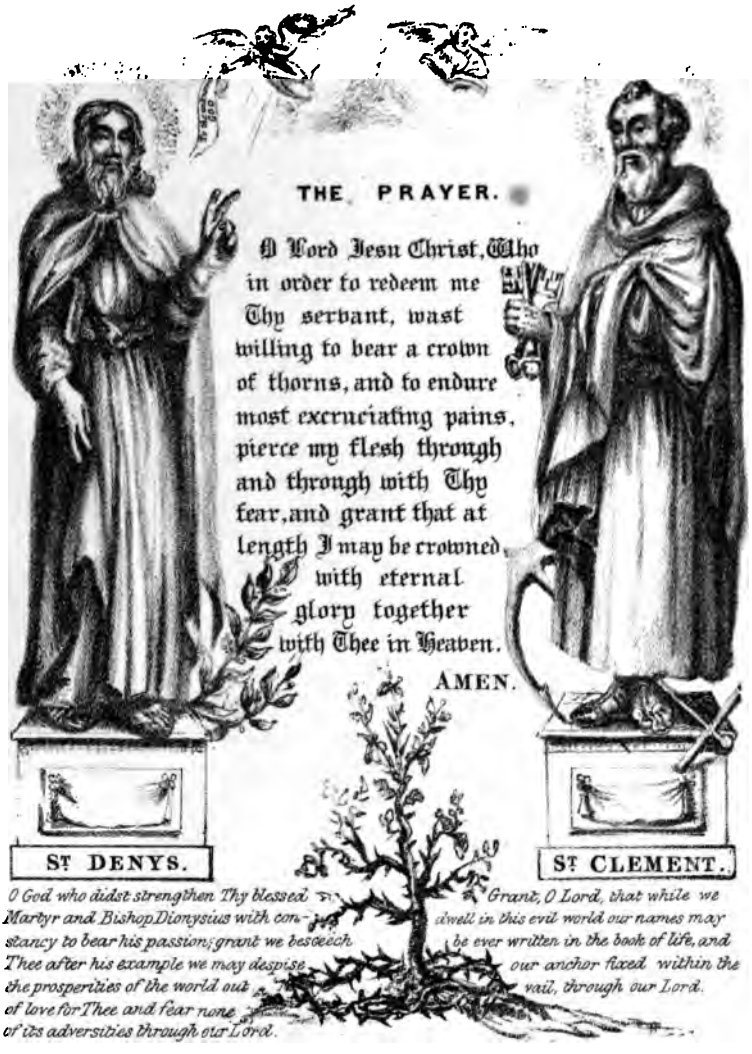
6.

"Blessed are they which have been sorrowful for all Thy scourges; for they shall rejoice for Thee, when they have seen all Thy glory, and shall be glad for ever."

Thy sorrows were one cloud of black amaze,
  Unmitigated gloom due to our sin;
  But unto us an angel face comes in,
And still with solitary sweetness stays,
  Pleading to tender sympathies within
For Thee and for Thy sorrows, while we gaze,
  Amid the gathering storm; as fain to win
From recklessness of our too mirthful days
  To love Thy sorrows, and to be with Thee,
  Rather than in the world. Thus unto me
A star comes out beyond the stormy sky
  That wrapt Thee round: to us Thy Blood is Wine,
  Thy griefs our hope, Thy dying life divine,
Refreshment in Thine anguish-drooping Eye.

The Crown of Thorns.

Prayer for the Church Militant.



O God who didst strengthen Thy blessed Martyr and Bishop Dionysius with constancy to bear his passion; grant we beseech Thee after his example we may despise the prosperities of the world out of love for Thee and fear none of its adversities through our Lord.

Grant, O Lord, that while we dwell in this evil world our names may be ever written in the book of life, and our anchor fixed within the vail, through our Lord.

XIV.

THE CROWN OF THORNS.

1.

"He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it."

"WHAT is His crime? One to a kingdom born!
Come, let us make a glorious diadem,
At every point shall be a living gem,
We with His own tiara will adorn,
And, circled with the radiance of the morn,
Shew thee thy King, thou proud Jerusalem!
His bleeding temples shall supply the stem
With rubies, and its rays the twisted thorn."
O hell-born skill of fierce imperial Rome,
Well might they deem thee from the very womb
Nurtured by savage beast amid the wild;
With blood of all the nations now defiled;
Henceforth thyself shalt thine own Cæsars own,
And know and feel thyself the thorny crown.

2.

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help. I will be thy King."

But clothe Him first!—no more those garments mean,—
  Bring forth the purple for the kingly gown,
  Such as may best become the imperial crown,
And well be suited to the royal mien;
The mirror wherein best His state is seen.
  Zion, go forth thy promised King to own!
  Thou hast for Him prepared this regal throne;
For thee He now is scourged; for thee this scene,
  This day of His espousals is for thee—
The Bride which He hath cherished now so long.
  "Thy Maker is thy Husband," and to plead
More powerfully with thee He bears this wrong,—
  The diadem that burns around His Head,
And robe that speaks, but mocks at, majesty.

3.

"They know not what they do."

O types of suffering and of sovereignty,—
  The scarlet robe, a crown that makes to bleed!
  And for a sceptre add the hollow reed
Of scorn and weakness;—then they bend the knee,
And bow to Him in mock humility:
  While one hath seized in sport the sceptred weed,
  And with it strikes upon His crowned Head
(Oh, art refined in murderous cruelty!)
  Driving the thorns more deeply; while e'en now—
  O blindness terrible!—around that Brow
Of unseen Godhead, on Whose smile or frown
  Bliss everlasting hangs or endless woe,
The Blood bursts forth beneath the thorny crown,
  And to His purple garment trickles down.

4.

"And thorns shall come up in her palaces."

The King of Martyrs thus, with His own band
  Dyed in their blood around His kingly seat,
  And sufferers hallowed by the Paraclete,
Against the evil world hath ta'en His stand.
For man's own sake and benefit, the land
  Sends forth its thorns and briers at his feet,
  To furnish unto him his chastenings meet:
Therefore Eternal Wisdom so hath plann'd,
  That when the Second Man shall ope the door
Of pardon, and mankind with power divine
  Through sorrow and atonement shall restore,
He of man's woes shall expiation make,
  Shall seize of sin the very scourge and sign,
And for the emblem of His kingdom take.

5.

"We also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God."

We bear not on our brows a ray divine
  Caught from Thy glory, nor one glowing gem,
  Nor the bright star of honoured Bethlehem,
But Thine own Cross impress'd—Thy Father's sign.
In adoration when our knees incline
  To Thee our King, of David's royal stem,
  We see Thee not with throne and diadem;
But on the Cross in anguish, there to pine.
  So deep-polluted had become Thy Bride,
  That Thou for love, to woo her to Thy side,
These "foul and filthy" garments didst put on,—
Thyself abasing that she might be won,
  And in Thy Father's house with Thee abide,
Clothed with the robe of the Eternal Son.

6.

" Then she that is Mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto Me, Where is the Lord Thy God."

In the fair autumn of the year's decline,
  When quiet stars come forth at evensong,
  There doth a something to the skies belong
That speaks of roseate light which is divine;
When the sun sinks into his western shrine,
  Leaving on even-gate a blood-like stain,
  As on the door the paschal victim slain.
Those tints of light that blend with purple wine,
  Which the sun leaves behind, portend a morn
Of glorious promise, quiet skies serene;[1]
  And even now, in its decline new-born,
The nascent moon with all her stars is seen.
  Thus as our Sun goes down in His own Blood,
  Comes forth His Church with her bright multitude.

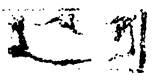
[1] " Quod dixit Dominus, *Facto vespere dicitis serenum erit; rubicundum est enim cœlum;* id est, sanguine passionis Christi, in primo adventu indulgentia peccatorum datur. *Et mane, Hodie tempestas; rubet enim cum tristitiâ cœlum;* id est, quod secundo adventu igne præcedente venturus est. *Faciem ergo cœli judicare nostis; signa autem temporum non potestis?* Signa temporum dixit de adventu suo vel passione, cui simile est roseum cœlum vespere: et item de tribulatione ante adventum suum futurâ, cui simile est mane roseum cum tristitiâ cœlum."—*S. Aug. Quæst. Evang.* I. 20, tom. iii. ed. Bened.

"Behold the Man."

The Exhortation.

THE PRAYER.

O Lord Jesu Christ,
Who didst endure the cruel
mocking of soldiers
spitting on Thee, and
smiting thy Head with
blows, grant that
I may never
lend a willing
ear to whatsoever
flattereth me.
AMEN.



St IGNATIUS.

Grant O God, that they who have been taken up into thine Arms at Holy Baptism may ever bear about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, through our Lord, &c.

St POLYCARP.

Vouchsafe unto us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, such Chief Pastors of Thy Flock, that they may be willing to offer up themselves as Sacrifices unto Thee, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who ever liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, &c.

XV.

"BEHOLD THE MAN!"

1.

"Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?"

WHO cometh with His garments dyed in blood
From Edom and from Bozrah? Who is able
From death and hell,—which unassailable,
With walls defying heaven so long have stood,—
To save? In His own wondrous solitude
He comes, beyond all lore or ancient fable,
In His strength travelling unapproachable.
The flesh cannot discern the Only Good,
Apparell'd thus in His own conquest day.
Yea, 'mong themselves the very angels say,
"Lo, who is this that cometh? Who is He
Whose Name is Secret?" They who shall attend
His conquering march shall answer to the end,
"To know that Name is immortality."

2.

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter."

By Judas led to Annas; then sent round
From Annas to blaspheming Caiaphas;
From Caiaphas to Pilate; then led bound
From Pilate to Herodian Antipas;
And thence again to Pilate; then disown'd
By Pharisees and people, scourged and crown'd:
Then rise the voices of the infuriate mass—
Give us not this Man, give us Barabbas!
With one great voice of that fierce multitude
'Twas Satan who aloud call'd for His blood,—
As if the lion of the forest brayed[1]
After his prey, beholding Him betrayed;
And then as beaten, mock'd, and under ban,
Pilate brings forth, and says, "Behold the Man!"

3.

"Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow."

"Behold the Man!" the Gentile says full well:
The garment, and the crowning, and the rod,—
With suffering crown'd, humiliation shod,—
Man by His woes in meekness visible;
The "Man of Sorrows!" Who the wounds shall tell
Of Him Who hath alone the wine-press trod?
But loudly cries astonish'd Israel,
He made Himself to be the Son of God:
Therefore both Man and God: the Man behold
In burning characters writ on His brow,
His very Manhood there by woe imprest.
Behold your God! e'en Zion hath confess'd
What to the winds His words and deeds have told,
Behold your God, for healing or for woe!

[1] Jer. xii. 7, 8.

4.

"Nevertheless Thy saints had a very great Light."

The fire of Godhead filled the thorny blaze,
  Which in that mansion unconsuming burn'd,
  Like the moon in a cloud, when Moses turn'd
With awe adoring on the sight to gaze,—
Unharming incommunicable rays.
  Thus Godhead in the Manhood was discern'd,
  Which made the flesh Its home; and thence hath learn'd
The thorny bed of anguish and amaze.
And such the token, when with might divine
  The Everlasting would His people call
  Through the Red Sea, from the Egyptian thrall,
With them within the wilderness to plead;
  Again enshrined in fire-illumined sign,
Onward to unseen Canaan did He lead.

5.

"We all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

The eye swift glances, yet in passing by
  Takes to itself whate'er it may behold,
  Whether the face and form of human mould,
Or boundless spreading sea, or summer sky,
With all the stretch of their immensity.
  And they who look beneath the eyelid's fold,
  See the enamell'd mirror there enroll'd,
Lurking unknown beneath the unconscious eye.
  And thus upon this picture would I gaze,
  That while my solemn thought the scene portrays,
The soul within her may the impress keep,
In prayer and meditation lodging deep;
  That when the Eye of God may look thereon,
  He may discern the Image of His Son.

6.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Hues fair as those which evening skies illume
  Lie hidden in the seed, till, fed with dew
  And foster'd by sunbeams, they come to view.
Lock'd once in treasury of that dark tomb,
Wherein they buried lay as in the womb;
  Now in fresh being, beautiful and new,
  They hang above the spot from whence they grew.
Thus martyr-souls, from the o'erwhelming gloom
  Which wrapt awhile their awful going hence,
  In pity beyond human utterance,
May now in tearful beauty hang their head,
  Mid graces which are heavenly, yet of earth.
For from the grave where sorrow made her bed
  Are all the virtues of our second birth.

Christ condemned to the Cross

The General Confession.

ST SIMEON.

As the Blessed Simeon endured great torments, and was crucified for his meekness unto Thee, grant O Lord strength to us also that we may suffer patiently for Thy sake, Who livest &c

THE PRAYER.

O Lord Jesu Christ, Whom Pilate when he had scourged, delivered up to be crucified, as Thou didst thus willingly offer up Thyself for our sins, grant that we may in like manner humbly receive the stripes of Thine anger, which for our sins we deserve.

AMEN.

ST JUSTIN.

Grant O God that we may so pursue all wisdom and knowledge, that they may ever bring us more and more unto Thy Son, Jesus Christ, Who is the true Light, and ever liveth &c

XVI.

CHRIST CONDEMNED.

1.

"The Anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits, of Whom we said, Under His shadow we shall live."

When kings are by their subjects doom'd to die,
  All Christian hearts strange horror doth appal,
  And boding expectations on them fall
Of some unwonted and dire tragedy,—
Embodied evil seems itself so nigh.
  And when the martyrs in man's judgment-hall
  Under decree of death are given in thrall,
Our souls are touched by a strange sympathy,
  Beyond expression of the outer sense;
  Though these be heirs of sin and death, yet thence
In these emotions of man's heart is shewn
Something more deep than to himself is known,
Which witness bears to God's Anointed One,—
  A King condemn'd in perfect innocence.

2.

"Look how wide also the east is from the west, so far hath He set our sins from us."

From sentence pass'd on Adam's sinful brood,
  To that last Judgment whither all things tend,—
  Midway between man's origin and end,
This condemnation of our God hath stood;
Nay, rather doth, in mourning attitude,
  From end to end its outstretch'd shade extend;
  And whosoe'er would rightly comprehend
This mortal being, capable of good,
  In that dear shadow sees mankind, and 'neath
  The coming on of what is after death,—
Those vast realities of which to hear,
Man's soul unto its centre shakes with fear,—
  Thus daily shall himself regard, and prove
  The depth of that great truth—that God is Love.

3.

"The love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In all things that portend this world's decease,
  As the quick fall of all that is therein,
  And death's dark rangers, whose broad net doth win
By subtle sure instalments,—as Disease,
Winter, Decay, and Sorrow,—in all these
  We read Thy condemnation, and our sin,—
  Our sin which went so fast when once let in
That it could never rest in its increase,
  Until this height of heights it had attain'd,
Which could no further go, but reach'd the skies.
  Then in the strife Thy Love the conquest gain'd,
Which, like a mantle, from the All-seeing Eyes
  Strove our exceeding sinfulness to hide,
  And by humility to slay our pride.

4.

"If one died for all, then were all dead."

Each day he lives is man condemn'd to die,
  By One Who sits within the Judgment-hall
  Rais'd in the heart of every criminal,
Whose righteous sentence no one can put by:
And then the stern decree to ratify,
  Sleep still returns in night's o'ershadowing pall,
  And sets death's stamp and image on us all.
To this Thy condemnation would I fly,
  That, self-condemn'd, while o'er myself I grieve,
  I may in this, Thy dying, find reprieve:
But as Thou in Thy love, in this our stead,
As one with guilt oppress'd dost hang Thy Head,
  I would put on my own mortality
  By dying to myself, and live to Thee.

5.

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

If this the mirror be of things on earth,—
  All men with one consent against Thee stirr'd,
  And e'en Barabbas unto Thee preferr'd,—
Then let me not in seriousness or mirth
Grieve to be set aside as nothing worth,
  Another listen'd to, admired, and heard.
  Such are occasions upon me conferr'd,
Whereby I may attest my better birth;
  This is the daily dying I must love;
  In Thee my lineage thus, and portion prove;
While I in my own breast my sentence bear,
  Self-judging, self-condemn'd. Then why should I
  Chafe at my prison-house, if thus to die
Is in Thy Righteousness to have a share?

6.

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

But Self must first be kill'd by penitence,
  And buried in the grave of healthful sorrow:
  The suns that harbinger a golden morrow
Blend with the hues of blood, and goings hence
In darkness, and soft tears which clouds dispense.
  'Tis only thus our sinful selves undoing
  That aught in us is bred which finds renewing,
And may partake in Christ's own innocence.
  The seed must disappear in wintry bed
  Ere it in the full harvest lifts its head,
When He Who bears the sickle shall descend,
Sitting on a white cloud. O wondrous end!
  When Pharisee and Pilate, we and they
  Before their Criminal stand on that day!

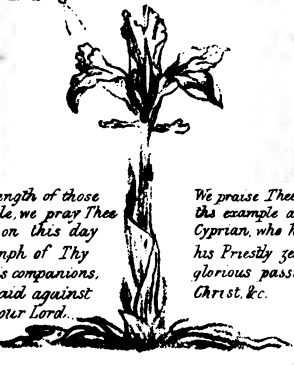
Pilate washing his hands.

The Absolution.

THE PRAYER.

O Lord Jesu Christ, Who, although judged to be innocent by Pilate the Governor, yet didst willingly hear the multitude crying out against Thee, grant unto me Thy suppliant to have my conversation in so great innocency of life, that the mouths of those who speak evil against me may be stopped.

AMEN.



St IRENÆUS.

O God, Who art the invisible strength of those that contend for Thee, be favorable, we pray Thee to our supplications, that as we on this day commemorate the glorious triumph of Thy sacred martyrs, Irenæus and his companions, we may also be fortified by Thy aid against spiritual wickedness; through our Lord.

St CYPRIAN.

We praise Thee, O Lord, for giving to Thy Church this example and the prayers of the blessed Cyprian, who hath become renowned both for his Priestly zeal, and for the triumph of his glorious passion, through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

XVII.

PILATE WASHING HIS HANDS.

1.

"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid.

But e'en the Governor, arrayed in might,
  Is moved within by an unwonted fear,
  Trembling before his lowly Prisoner;
A soldier used to every murderous sight,
The very heathen, in his own despite,
  Feels judgment greater than his own is near,—
  The judge doth like the guilty one appear;
The Roman quails before an Israelite:
  I deem that fable strong in mystery,
  That lions of the forest will pass by
  Cowering at sight of virgin purity;
And thus the world, e'en in her fiercest mood,
By envy onward urged to deeds of blood,
Still trembles while it persecutes the good.

2.

"Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before Me, saith the Lord God."

Many would wash their hands from Thy dear Blood
With Pilate, unabsolved by self within;
The accuser sits behind them, and therein
Mocks them in doing ill with thoughts of good,
Leaving the hollow front of fortitude
To cover craven spirits he would win.
And what avails the loud-tongued multitude
Against that still small Voice which speaks of sin?
The earthquake and the thunder are soon gone,
And that dread whisper then will plead alone:
Nor can the breath of crowds, more guilty still,
E'er chase away, like a fresh-blowing wind,
The noxious vapours it hath left behind,
Or rectify the sin-perverted will.

3.

"Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Thou, Lord, must bring Thyself the absolving stream;
Thyself alone canst wash away the stain;
The streams of Paradise would flow in vain—
In vain a sea of tears on the sad theme;
In vain would costly sacrifice redeem
One guilty spot;—yea, this release to gain,
Hath all creation groaned so long in pain,
Striving, as if in some guilt-haunted dream,
To cleanse the stain; the ingrain'd spot remains:
For this hath Superstition raised her shrines,
And 'mid her countless victims inly pines.
One drop of Thy dear Blood is more than all;
Thy word of power, that bursts death's prison-chains,
Alone can cleanse the will, lost power recall.

4.

"While I held my tongue, my bones consumed away."

First the all-trembling consciousness of ill
  Deems earth and heaven have eyes, and the sick mind
  Would fain herself unbosom to the wind,
But shame-struck back recoils; then soon the will,
  With Satan's cords yet more and more entwined,
Adds to the load, and leaves her labouring still;
  Till to the headlong stream at length resigned,
She hastes of crime the measure to fulfil,
  In recklessness of conscience ill at ease.
But blessèd they to whom 'tis timely given
  At God's own mercy-seat to seek release,
  And find a refuge in the absolving keys,
Which ope heaven's door, pour in celestial air,
And lead anew to penitential care.

5.

"Their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all."

Thus have I known when on a sultry noon,
  Beneath the vapour-loaded atmosphere,
  All creatures hung their head, like guilty fear;
Nature breathed thick and faint, and out of tune;
Big drops descended one by one, and soon,
  As with a momentary quick surprise,
Around, far brighter than the autumnal moon,
  The vivid lightnings bathed the o'erhanging skies,
The clouds unlock'd the fountains of their tears,
The heavens expanded; then released from fears,
  Earth looks up for renewal of their love;
The trees with all their little leaves rejoice;
The mountains and the valleys find a voice;
  One multitudinous song fills all the grove.

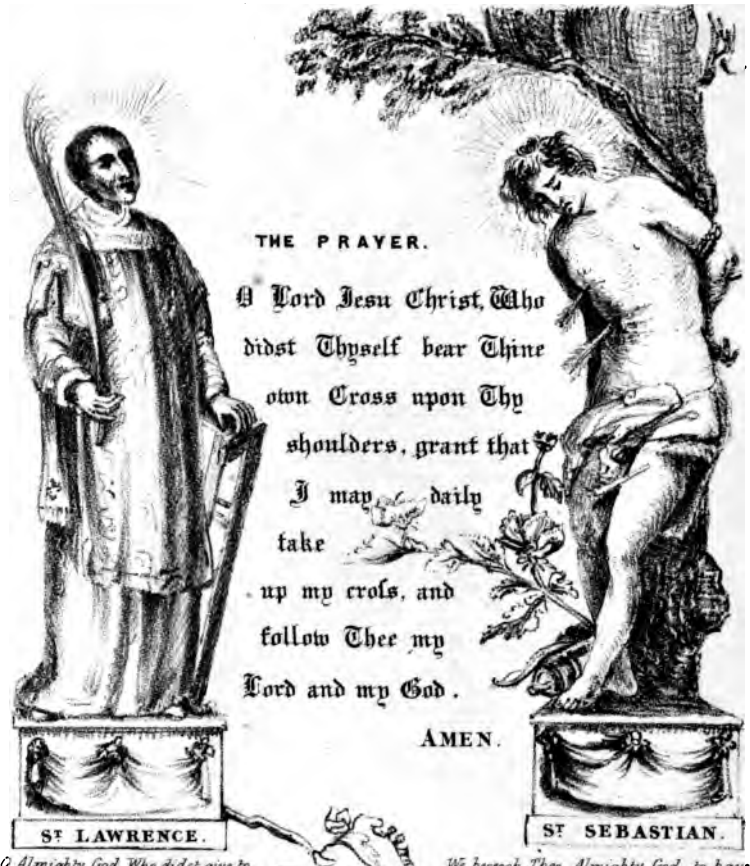
6.

" His flesh shall be ffesher than a child's, he shall return to the days of his youth."

Oh, peaceful calm of guilt and doom repealed,
As when before the priest the leper stood
With ulcerous contagions all subdued,
And to the faithful eye in hope revealed:
Then the meek dove pronounced the leper healed,
Slain o'er the running stream,—the stream of blood
Went down to Jordan's blest Baptismal flood:
He from his sickness cleansed, and freedom sealed,
Walked in the Holy City once again.
Thus when the golden keys retrieve the stain,
What if the mingled stream of blood and tears
Flows to the Baptism of our earlier years;
And the regenerate soul, by sin defiled,
Come from the stream again a healthful child.

Christ bearing His Cross.

Invitation.



O Almighty God, Who didst give to Thy servant St Lawrence to overcome by patience the fires of his torments, grant us grace, we beseech Thee, to extinguish the flames of our lusts by faith in Thee, through our Lord &c.

We beseech Thee, Almighty God, to have compassion upon our weakness, that whereas we are heavily laden by the weight of our own infirmities, we may be strengthened by the example of Thy suffering martyrs, through our Lord &c.

XVIII.

CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS.

1.

"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me."

THE way of sorrows and this burden sore
  Are of Thy life the sad epitome,
  Wherein a weight of sorrows hung on Thee,
With Thine eyes on us fixed for evermore,
That we may rest our hearts on Thee before,
  And gazing on Thee in Thy way of grief,
  May from our very sorrows find relief,
Till hardship be to us hardship no more;
  That Thou, by Thine abasement and deep loss,
  May'st clothe us with Thy Godhead by Thy Cross.
So may our heart of hearts of Thee partake,
Till sorrow becomes welcome for Thy sake,
  And e'en our punishment becomes our rest,
  Exalted more, the more we are oppress'd.

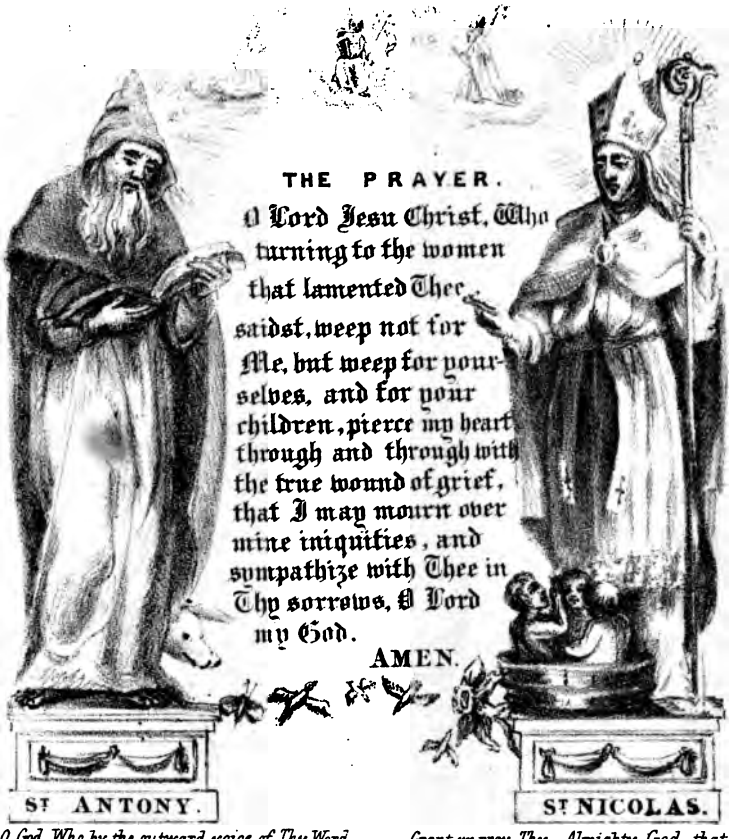
6.

"We will not sin, knowing that we are counted Thine."

Lord, can it be that we, of feeble frame,
  By taking Thine own burden make it less,
  And share the weights that on Thy shoulders press?
As he who to the Holy City came,
  Meeting Thee in that hour of Thy distress,
And followed,—for "obedience" was his name,—
  Bearing Thy Cross for Thee; so dost Thou bless
Obedience, and to Thee dost draw the same,
  When penitential thoughts within us burn.
  Yea, if so dear to Thee our love's return,
That they who see Thy Face at this rejoice,
Reading therein the Eternal Mind and Voice;
  They and their love were present to Thee now,
  Like a refreshing breeze on Thy faint Brow.

Christ calls the women to self lamentation.

The Prayer of humble accefs



O God, Who by the outward voice of Thy Word, and inward motion of Thy Grace didst stir up the blessed Antony to give up all things in order that he might be perfect; grant unto all them that have entered upon the race of Evangelical perfection, so to run that they may obtain the prize of everlasting happiness; through our Lord.

Grant, we pray Thee, Almighty God, that our holding in memory the examples of Thy blessed Saints may increase our devotion, and tend to our salvation; through our Lord.

XIX.

THE MOURNING WOMEN.

1.

" But Jesus, turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

How many tears since that portentous morn
  Have been by pilgrims shed in that dear spot,—
  The way of sorrows, or in hallowed grot,
Amid as now the unbeliever's scorn,
Or at Gethsemane, and altars worn
  By kneeling worshippers, or on the height
  Of Calvary, or e'en at distant sight
Of Salem on her mountain-seat forlorn!
  Lest sin should be forgotten 'mid those tears,
When tenderness intense hath wrapt the soul
  Of way-worn pilgrim, hath the stern appeal
Of these Thy words, with a Divine control
  Himself unto himself served to reveal,
And oped repentance on forgotten years.

2.

" For if they do these things in a green tree—"

And not alone on Sion's holy ground
  Do these, Thy warning words, knock at the gate
  Of Conscience, with self-mourning and self-hate,
But wheresoe'er the feeling soul is found,
Which, half-forgetful of her own deep wound,
  Weeps at her Saviour's ills compassionate,
  But to her own true sorrows wakes too late,
Or too remissly. When the day comes round,
  Each year or week which doth Thy woes present,
Or hour which daily marks Thine agonies,
So oft upon the soul Thine uprais'd eyes
Are turned,—and these Thy words of sorrow call,
  " Weep not for Me, but your own sins lament,
Beneath whose weight unto the ground I fall."

3.

" What shall be done in the dry ?"

Weep not for Me,—for thine own children mourn,
  The offspring of thy bowels, evil deeds
  And evil thought, which from the heart proceeds ;
These are the stripes by which My Flesh is torn ;
These plant upon My Brows the twisted thorn,
  That as I sink and fall the pavement bleeds.
  For thee I weep,—for thy transcendent needs
When on the dead dry tree the fire is born
Which never more shall perish or decline ;
  When desolation at thy door appears,
Thy visitation past, thy foes around :
  Therefore I bid thee join thy woes with Mine,
While, ere those ever-during flames abound,
  They yet may be extinguished by thy tears.

4.

"Thou makest it soft with the drops of rain, and blessest the increase of it."

Yea, Nature doth herself the type present
  Of penitential sorrow to our eyes,—
Hanging with clouds the beauteous firmament,
Not only 'mid fierce storms to winter lent,
  But also in the tranquil summer skies,
Where love itself doth seem to spread his tent
  Above us, 'mid those crystal canopies,
  Without whose aid on earth each creature dies.
The unclean spirit, banished from the blest,
Walks ever through *dry places* seeking rest;
  Where not a tear bedews the barren ground,
But stern impenitence doth aye remain.
  He Who His blessed kingdom spreads around—
He walketh on the clouds and giveth rain.

5.

"He sendeth out His word, and melteth them: He bloweth with His wind, and the waters flow."

To Thee mine eyes are turned, the hard rock smite,
  Grant me Thyself the gracious gift of tears
  To wash the wilderness of my past years,
E'en such as Peter wept, woke by Thy light,
Muffling his face in that o'erwhelming night:
  Or that loved sinner who 'mid guilty fears,
  In love o'erflowing, at Thy feet appears:
Or saintly Magdalene, who in Thy sight
  Stood weeping at Thy grave, and thought Thee gone
  From her sad eyes; those morning dew-drops shone
  In the Sun's beams one moment, then were flown
For ever: or as he for his deep stain
Wept tears which in his Sion still remain,
To crystal turned in penitential strain.

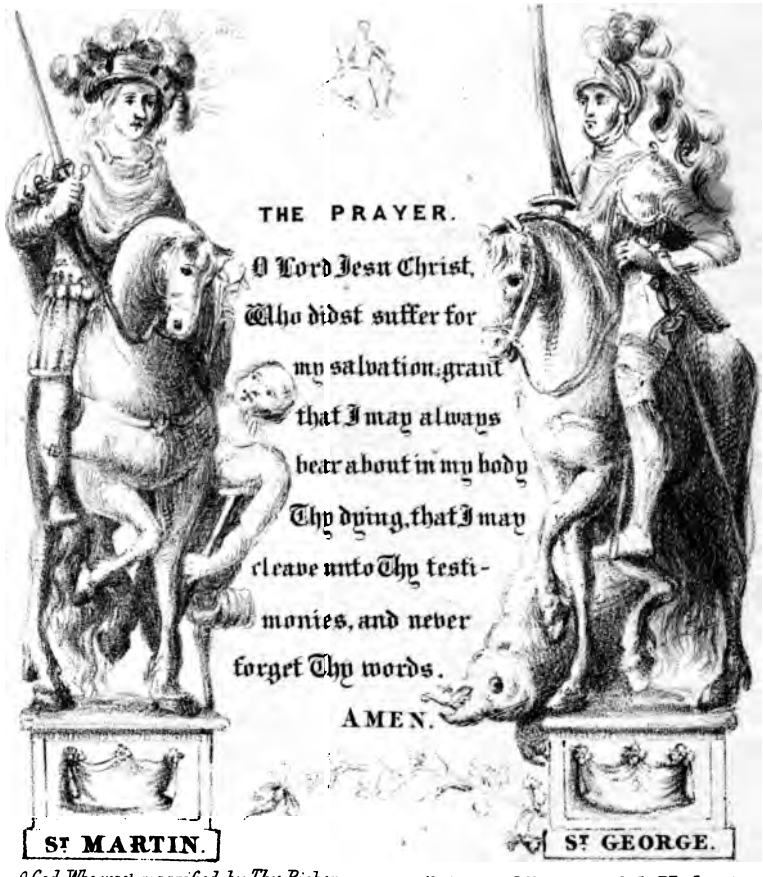
6.

"They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way."

The gifts most gracious which descend from high
  Are things that minister to sacred woe,
  That we thereby may learn ourselves to know,
Bringing to view the things that had gone by.
Thus distant mountains 'neath the o'erdarken'd sky
  Come near us, and distinct their shadows shew,
  'Neath clouds whose watery treasures drop below,
And voices from afar come floating nigh.
  When summer suns grow warm on Cedron's vale,
That brook of sorrows is no longer seen,
  The olives on its bank droop sere and pale.
Thus when the world spreads o'er us skies serene,
  Forgotten are the thoughts of penitence,
  Which from dark heavens their fruitful tears dispense.

Christ is placed upon the Cross.

The Priest puts in order the Bread and Wine.



O God, Who wast magnified by Thy Bishop and Confessor St Martin, both in his life and in his death, renew in our hearts the same marvels of Thy grace, that neither life nor death may be able to separate us from the love of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who liveth with Thee.

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who kindlest in the hearts of Thy Saints the flame of Thy love, instill into our minds the graces of faith and charity, that rejoicing in the victories of Thy Martyrs we may profit by their examples; through our Lord.

XX.

THE NAILING TO THE CROSS.

1.

"They shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth; they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of Thee."

The long and heavy Cross extended lies
  In Golgotha, where on the hideous ground
  Many a bone and skull is haply found
Unburied; and in holes where once were eyes
  Stables some creeping thing, and looks around,
And 'mid the wrecks of human miseries
Bears witness to the worm that never dies
  In the soul's burial-place. What if that sound
Comes from the depths of secret Providence,
  Which speaks of man's first parent buried there?
Howbeit, in remembrance of that worm
Which raised in Paradise its serpent form,
It seems to mock at his inheritance,
  Cradling itself in crime's worst sepulchre.

2.

"Let his net that he hath hid catch himself; into that very destruction let him fall."

Himself deceived, the sire of death and lies
  Deems not how soon on that sepulchral floor
  He this his short-lived triumph shall deplore;
That Golgotha he fills with scornful cries
Is the gate of a better paradise
  Which he shall never enter any more,
  Of which that cruel wood is now the door.
That Cross he now delights in, to his eyes
  Henceforth shall be a thing at which, recoiled,
  He to the lowest depths shall sink despoiled,
As lightning falls from heaven; that Cross shall prove
The very sceptre of all-conquering love,
  Marked on each brow, and reared the heart within,
  A refuge from himself and powers of sin.

3.

"And laid the wood in order" . . . "and laid him on the altar upon the wood."

Upon the ground extended lies the Rood,
  In substance, not in shadow, to that mount
  Which the true Isaac bare. Who shall recount
His pains, as 'mid the unpitying multitude
  And scornful priests, from His pure virginal Flesh,
  Marked with those livid wounds that bleed afresh,
They strip His robe adhesive,—on the wood
They stretch His pallid Body; with His Blood
  The One true Priest His Altar doth anoint,
  As through His outstretch'd palms the iron point
They drive, and through His feet the piercing wound.
  His bones may all be number'd, joint by joint.
The God Who made all creatures, on the ground
Rack'd on the accursèd wood lies prostrate bound!

4.

" He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain."

Such was the dying bed Thou didst sustain,
That mind or body found no place of ease,
While mockery stood by, and fierce disdain:
But us, 'mid all our sins, if Thou should'st please
To lay at death's dark portal, while disease
Doth drop by drop our ebbing life-blood drain,
Thou sett'st around us tender offices,
And makest soft with love the bed of pain,
While watchers which about us gently stir
Are taught by Thee; and e'en, far more than those,
Thou art Thyself our very Comforter;
From that our pillow of desired repose
Thou tak'st the thorns, and for Thine own dost wear,
Laying Thine Head upon their piercing throes.

5.

" When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto Thee."

Lord, I have gazed upon approaching death,
When things which this our earthly sojourn bless
Seemed as in distance growing less and less,
Nor knew before what love then cherisheth,
Spreading the everlasting Arms beneath,
So terrible in Thy deep tenderness,
Which tears alone in silence can express,
With the faint sinking frame and failing breath.
Then, 'mid the agonies of mortal fear,
When dark eternity knocked at the door,
In utter helplessness and guilty pain
Did Thy absolving keys my soul sustain;
Conscious at that dread hour that Thou wast near,
I felt a blessedness unknown before.

6.

"I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath."

But not so was Thine own departing bed,
When they of Thine acquaintance stood aloof,
Their love in fear forgotten, and reproof
Had broke Thine heart, when in that hour so dread
All was out-poured on Thine unsheltered Head,
Which stood the impetuous storm in our behoof;
When terrors thronged the sky's o'er-arching roof,
And evil spirits were around Thee shed.
Then as the nails Thy tender hands did strain,
When cruelty sought out each place of pain;
So did the sinews of Thine heart give way
Beneath the arrows of the Almighty's wrath,
When Thou didst stand in our descending path
To take on Thee our load in sad dismay.

Christ prays for His murderers.

"This is my Blood,"
"which is shed for you and for many."

That our sacrifice may be full and entire, grant, O God, that we may count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, and after the example of this Thy Teacher may know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified, Who liveth.

Grant, O Lord, to the sacred ministry of Thy Church the spirit of wisdom and courage, by which the blessed John Chrysostom ceased not to convince sinners, and for the love of Thy name overcame manifold tribulations; through our Lord.

XXI.

THE CROSS LIFTED UP.

1.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

And now, with strength combined of murderous hands,
  The Cross uplifted Thy pale Frame sustains,
  Rooted and fixed with violence, which strains
Thy wounds afresh; and as it upward stands,
Thine own deep wounds themselves are made the bands
  That hold Thee on death's bed; with bursting veins
  Thy Body hangs upon its own dread pains.
Each way extending, broad as Thy commands,
  Deep as Thy judgments, as Thy mercies high,
It stretches forth; and shews with mystic sign
The breadth, and depth, and height of Love Divine,
Which forms ineffably that throne of Thine;
  Broad as all space in boundless majesty,
  Deeper than Hell, and higher than the sky.

2.

"I became dumb, and opened not my mouth; for it was Thy doing."

Thus He Who is Himself the Eternal Truth
  Turns into truth these shadows as they pass,
  And makes men's evil deeds to be the glass
To mirror His perfections; for, in sooth,
He works His will alike in weal or ruth.
  As shadows that fleet o'er the waving grass
  Are but reflections of the cloudy mass
That range the heavens above, and vex or soothe
  The summer skies, filling the passive hills
With thunder-falls or spots of dark repose;
  E'en so whate'er for final good He wills
In man's free agencies He will disclose;—
  Infinite Love! though man, 'neath seeming ills,
Knows not His coming steps, nor where He goes.

3.

"He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."

And now the lifting-up sets open wide
  The gates of agony: thus to fulfil
  The accumulated crown of murderous skill.
They who are lifted heavenward, by His side,
Upon their Cross in patience must abide.
  Because He willed, He suffered; 'tis the will
  That sanctifies the suffering, and sets still
Each thought that to impatience is allied;
  'Tis suffering that affords the wond'rous price
  To every guilt-atoning sacrifice.
The offerings of Cain were fruits of earth,
Not sanctified by suffering, nothing worth;
  But Abel's worthier gift was of the slain,
  And dying animals that spoke of pain.

4.

"He stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed."

When Thou wast laid on the sin-cursèd ground
(Man's hiding-place until the day of doom),
It, sanctified by Thee, became the womb
Of Resurrection. Now, 'mid skies around,
The living Victim to the Altar bound,
'Mid universal nature's dreadful gloom
Thou shedd'st Thy light our darkness to illume;
With patience and with love immortal crowned,
Our Conqueror lifted on Thy throne; and there,
Pursuing through his realms the prince of air,
From soul-destroying vapours and disease
Clearing the foul and poisonous atmosphere;
Henceforth a road for saints to mount the skies,
Full of celestial and sweet influences.

5.

"To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety."

The Cross is lifted up on Calvary's height,
And we thereby are lifted up to Heaven;
Such earth-redeeming power therein is given.
The beasts may earthward bend their lowering sight,
But man doth bear his countenance upright,
That he may gaze upon the Cross and live,
And our affections so may upward strive,
Taking their wing from thence and power of flight
To Heaven. O Form of everlasting flame,
Fed by the anointing of the oil of love,
Be in us, that, untired and still the same,
Our busy-searching thoughts may ever move
Upward, unto the place from whence they came!

6.

" He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

There is a tale in Eastern fable told
  Of a magnetic isle in distant seas,
  To which as barks borne by the heavenly breeze
Approach, in manner strange and manifold,
The iron spars no longer keep their hold,
  But part in sunder. Thus when ride at ease,
  Knit by a thousand iron purposes,
The full-rigged schemes of worldlings proud and bold,
  They loosely walk, as on a summer sea,
  Upon their own unfathomed destiny;
But if by timely Providences driven
To Thee, the stable Truth and land of Heaven,
Then all their worldly homes are sunder riven,
  And they who seize the Wood[1] are borne to Thee.

[1] " God has afforded the plank or wood by which we may reach the shore, and that wood is the Cross of Christ. One who has no eyes to see embraces this Cross; and while from afar he knows not whither he is to go, if he looses not his hold on this wood, it will bear him to it."—*St. Augustin, in Joan. Evan.* ii.

Blood dropping from the Cross.

The Priest takes the Cup into his hand.

O God, Who didst endue Ambrose, Thy holy Bishop, with boldness to rebuke and sweetness to persuade; grant that refreshed by the sweetness of Thy love, we may so give heed unto his teaching, that through keeping of Thy commandments we may be prepared for the joys of Heaven, through &c.

O God, Whom with the blessed Augustin we acknowledge in this sacred mystery to be the food of babes on earth, grant of Thy great goodness that we may thereby be rendered meet to partake in Heaven of that meat which belongs to those who have come to the full stature of Christ, through &c.

XXII.

THE CROSS DROPPING BLOOD.

1.

"It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."
"Ye shall pour it upon the earth as water."

BLOOD from His Hands is falling, drop by drop,
  And from His Temples; now in streams they roll—
  Haste downward to the earth as to their goal;
Now hang on His pale Body, and there stop,
Or on the wood below; till from the top
  Unto the base the blood-stains mark the whole.
  Such is the value of each human soul,
Which doth outweigh the world; and such the crop
  Of thorns which Adam sowed in Paradise.
What marvel, then, at sight of such deep woe,
  If penitential love should hide her eyes
From all the pleasant things which are below,
  In cloistral cells of prayer; nor seek relief
  But in each sternest discipline of grief?

2.

"Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of."

For doubtless hence whatever things belong
  To shame and pain and bodies mortified
  To Heavenward aspirations are allied,
With an intercommunion strange and strong.
Love from the ever-present sense of wrong
  Finds no repose, save when she can abide
  On any image of the Crucified,
Which in herself she finds, her sins among.
  For else the Church could nothing do but mourn
With lamentable moans, like one unblest;
  But when she finds her cross she upward springs,
Herself forgetting; like the dove forlorn,
  When cross-ways she expands her balanced wings
On bosom of the sky she is at rest.

3.

"Thou feddest Thine own people with angels' food."

When veins which swell with sensuous low desire
  Are emptied and made thin with abstinence,
  Thy Blood Divine shall from the heart dispense
To all the frame Its own celestial fire,
Known but in thoughts which upward shall aspire,
  Felt not nor seen; but throughout every sense
  Send forth the savour of Omnipotence,
To cleanse the will diseased, and to attire
  Decaying limbs with immortality;
Which, after they put off the sinful flesh,
With undecaying light shall bloom afresh;
  Obedience henceforth lost in love divine,
  The body all celestial discipline,
Fillèd with Resurrection and with Thee.

4.

" The elements were changed in themselves by a kind of harmony."

'Tis Thou dispensest the life-giving shower
  Through the vine's verdant veins, its hue and shape
  Instilling, till there hangs the purple grape,
And we discern the hidden Bridegroom's power
In water changed to wine: or thence that flower
  Nurturing to be Thy Passion's portraiture,
  In semblance of Thy sorrows to endure;
With hanging thorny crowns, and leaves spread o'er
  Like human-fingered palms, which bring to view
Thy pains for us on the accursèd Tree.
  Thus with Thy Blood, as with celestial dew,
  The kingdom of the soul Thou dost renew
With fruits and flowers divine, where angels see
Nought but developments which speak of Thee.

5.

" That Thy children, O Lord, whom Thou lovest, might know that it is not the growing of fruits that nourisheth man; but that it is Thy Word."

So shall Thy Blood become to us new wine,
  New wine of God, that maketh glad the heart
  Of the meek soul that hath in Thee her part;
And multiplied throughout in every sign,
Thy death our life, Thy memories are a shrine
  From evil thoughts. Yea, from ourselves Thou art
  Our covering and our refuge. Ne'er to start
Away from this the spirit's rest divine,
  Allured by cares or pleasures, love or strife,
  To the bad world; but here, for this short life,
In Thy dear Blood upon ourselves to gaze,
As in a fountain lit by the sun's rays:
  In Thee, the Eternal Mind, ourselves to know—
  This is the highest wisdom here below.

6.

"Where water stood before, dry land appeared; and out of the Red Sea a way without impediment."

Nor wonder that the Blood of Very God
  In union with our manhood hath such power
  To change our being in this life's short hour;
So that, awakened from an earthly clod,
Christ shall lead forth with His Almighty rod
  Sons to replenish Heaven; as the fair flower
  Springs upward, quickened by the vernal shower,
'Mid foulest elements of mouldering sod,
  The refuse of the world; as worms of earth
  To fair-winged flies that soar to heaven give birth:
Thus, quickened by His Blood, to life shall move
The spirits which shall dwell with God above,
  'Mid things which here offend the delicate sense,
  And self-debasing arts of penitence.[1]

[1] Infructuosæ arbori stercus adhibitum figura pœnitentiæ.—*St. August.*, vol. v. p. 1529, Par. ed.

Christ prays for His murderers.

"This is my Blood,
"which is shed for you and for many."

THE PRAYER.
O Lord Jesu Christ, Who on the altar of the Cross didst offer up Thyself to the Eternal Father for them that crucified Thee, grant that I may be meek and lowly in heart, and may love mine enemies.
AMEN.
ST BASIL.
ST CHRYSOSTOM.
That our sacrifice may be full and entire, grant, O God, that we may count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, and after the example of this Thy Teacher may know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified, Who liveth.
Grant, O Lord, to the sacred ministry of Thy Church the spirit of wisdom and courage, by which the blessed John Chrysostom ceased not to convince sinners, and for the love of Thy name overcame manifold tribulations, through our Lord.

XXIII.

CHRIST PRAYS FOR HIS ENEMIES.

1.

"When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

To love, be loved, and loved to love again,
  This, this is human at man's best estate:
  To love not loved, with good to antedate
All love; to pour forth good, and thence obtain
Neglect, unthankfulness, and proud disdain;
  To yearn in tender love compassionate
  O'er enemies that triumph in their hate;
To pray amid the agonies of pain
  For stern tormentors: this—this is Divine;
This is the inextinguishable Flame
  That from the Cross, as from a central shrine,
Doth quicken all Creation; this above
  Writes up the incommunicable Name
In burning characters, that God is Love.

2.

"God is love."

Love amid sufferings seen; oh, wondrous sight!
  Unearthly Love, the everlasting Fire,
  His Head encircled with the bleeding brier,
Amid His foes with strange unharming might,
Consumes not, but sends forth celestial light,
  Feeding on heaped-up ills; thence to aspire,
  With ampler volume, higher still and higher
Upward into its native Infinite;
  Building upon the woes which men have fearec
A ladder whereon saints to Heaven may rise.
By mystic staff brought forth to human eyes,
  Thus, feeding on the sacrifice, appeared
  Flames from the rock, and as they upward veered,
The angel sought therein his native skies.

3.

"They are Thine, O Lord, Thou lover of souls; for Thine incorruptible Spirit is in all things."

What are the pillars that support the skies,
  Holding the mirror of heart-cheering blue?
  'Tis all-embracing Love that comes to view,
Whose pillars are the prayers of Him Who dies
For good and evil, friends and enemies.
  What is the earth, with every form and hue
  Through each successive season ever new,
But Love, whose fostering bosom never dries;
  Whose adamantine arms are spread beneath,
  Sustaining just and unjust until death?
And what are seas majestic as they move,
  With moon and stars that sleep upon their breast,
  As on the shore they rise, then sink to rest;
What do their mighty throbbings speak but—Love?

4.

"And he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

But more than all in men of spirit poor,
  When sickness or pale fasts the feelings bless,
  Love comes to man in her unearthly dress;
Things long since passed, that she shall see no more,
Approach her from the everlasting shore;
  And something of a solemn tenderness
  The overflowing spirit will oppress.
While of occasions which had once touched sore,
  And ministered unkindness, nought remains
  But grieving Love, which, with unquiet pains,
  Fain would undo Hate's sin-engendering stains,
But cannot: inwardly the spirit bleeds,
And for herself and others ceaseless pleads;
While nothing else but prayer can speak her needs.

5.

"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

A little child that folds in love's embrace
  One that had harmed it, and forgives the wrong—
Of all things which to earth, sea, sky belong,
  This is the fairest; for it finds a place
  Within the better kingdom of God's grace,
Filling us with emotions deep and strong,
Which seek a vent in tears or holy song;
  And sets to view the Infant Saviour's Face
More than the painter's skill,—the Holy Child
To those that harmed Him more than reconciled,
  With meek forgiveness His avenging rod;
  Bringing on foes the Presence of their God,
That Presence which is love yet coals of fire,
Melting to penitence the murderer's ire.

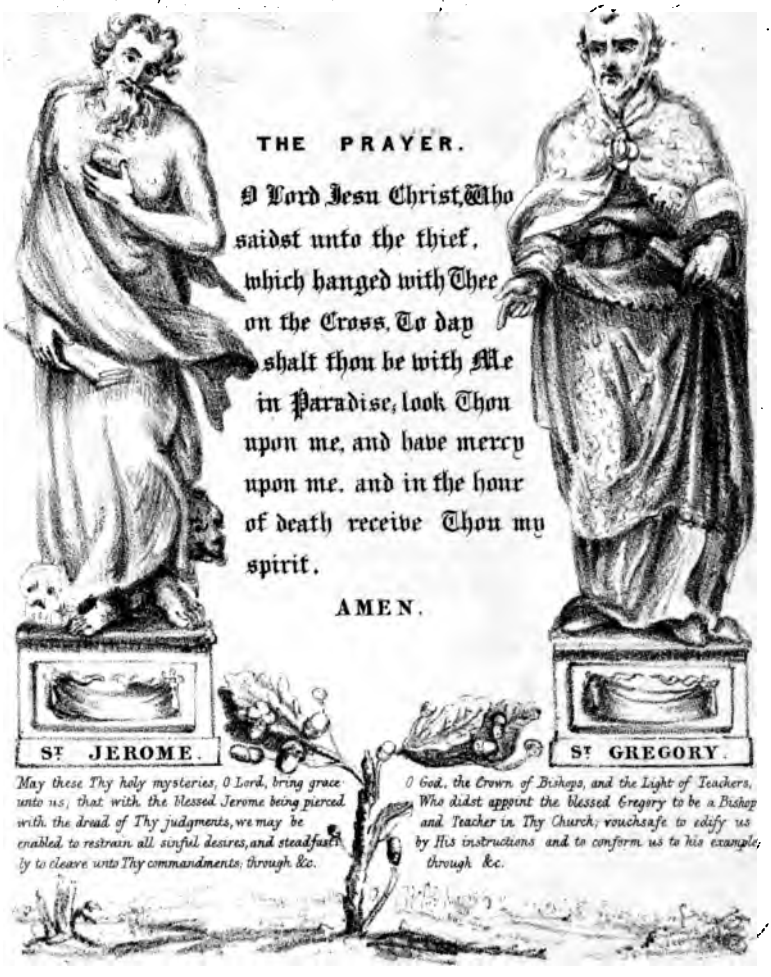
6.

"Charity never faileth."

Then, Lord, for this Thy Cross and Thy dear sake,
  Teach me that hard-earned skill of loving all,
  Foes, friends, and good and evil, great and small;
Of all things wherein self doth pleasure take
My being to unclothe, and from me shake
  All those impediments and weights that fall
  On the up-veering wing, or sounds that call
From behind: thus my stedfast bent to make,
  And the undeviating course to choose,
  Till all that's mine and mine own self I lose
In everlasting Love; and seen no more:
  As birds that fly into the sunlight, till
  The eye can no more follow them, o'er hill,
And valley, and deserted silent shore.

Christ promises Paradise.

"for the remiſsion of sins".


THE PRAYER.
O Lord Jesu Christ, Who saidst unto the thief, which hanged with Thee on the Cross, To day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise, look Thou upon me, and have mercy upon me, and in the hour of death receive Thou my spirit.
AMEN.
St JEROME.
May these Thy holy mysteries, O Lord, bring grace unto us; that with the blessed Jerome being pierced with the dread of Thy judgments, we may be enabled to restrain all sinful desires, and steadfastly to cleave unto Thy commandments; through &c.
St GREGORY.
O God, the Crown of Bishops, and the Light of Teachers, Who didst appoint the blessed Gregory to be a Bishop and Teacher in Thy Church; vouchsafe to edify us by His instructions and to conform us to his example; through &c.

XXIV.

THE PROMISE OF PARADISE.

1.

"Where I am, there shall also My servant be."

Not in the dark meridian firmament
  Would we discern our God; not in that cloud,
  Nor in that Voice in dying heard aloud,
Which shook Creation, and the strong rocks rent;
But in that pitying voice of One half-spent,
  Beneath of coming death the silent shroud,
  Which prayer of the meek penitent allowed;
And still small answer of the Omnipotent,
  Which spoke of endless morn ere day was run,
  In Paradise, lit by the eternal Sun.
Oh, that before I die that gentle word
  Might come unto my spirit, breathing rest;
  Then worlds might part asunder, in my breast
Nothing but that small Voice shall more be heard!

2.

"Oh, let the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners come before Thee; according to the greatness of Thy power preserve Thou those that are appointed to die."

From this Thy Mercy-seat, before all eyes,
  Thou stretchest forth Thine arms unto all space,
  Inviting all unto Thy love's embrace—
All comprehending as the summer skies,
Which bend to earth with fostering charities.
  But upon whom, and in what hour of grace,
  Dost Thou lift up Thy beatific Face,
With whispering Voice that speaks of Paradise?
  Not on the rich, the many, or the great:
On one alone; on one, in this world's view,
  A wretched outcast, scorned and desolate;
Who shares the Cross with Thee and owns it due,
  Claiming the King of sorrows as his own,
  And 'neath the o'erwhelming cloud discerns His throne.

3.

"He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."

Oh, might I 'neath that shadow find repose
  In the assurèd hope of endless morn,
  As all things I behold are westward borne
Unto their setting and the daylight's close!
But while I see Thy Face in dying throes,
  A thousand voices call to me to mourn,
  And cry aloud within my breast forlorn,
Ah, no! ah, no! thou canst not be as those,
  Or as that penitent who, in his pangs,
  Upon the bed of death in sorrow hangs!
Oh, faith beyond all faithfulness! when all
Forsook and fled, when e'en Apostles fall,
  As death's dark valley they together trod,
  He in the Man of Sorrows knows his God.

4.

"When my heart is in heaviness I will think upon God."

But in that dreadful secret not to press,
  And with no vain presuming confidence
  Of what must be at our departure hence,
While sitting at death's portal we confess
The heart-felt sense of our unworthiness
  Of aught but pains; then with no vain pretence
  The Spirit Which is veiled from outward sense
May in the sight of his own nothingness
  Comfort the mourner; for, in very deed,
  We know full well the hour of pressing need
Is the time ever chosen for relief,
And prayer hath comfort in the hour of grief;
  Such grace hath Baptism unto suffering given;
  Yet Love still fears on verge of Hell or Heaven.

5.

"I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily."
"My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch."

The lily, some lone fountain's favoured child,
  Holds all aloof from intercourse of earth,
  Wherein it has below its secret birth;
But in some watery hollow, free and wild,
Lifts up its virgin whiteness, undefiled,
  Suffused with blushes; when the sun grows warm
  Stretches its stalk erect, and lifts its form
Above the pool's calm face awhile beguiled;
  But when night's shades come on, its air-borne crest
  Contracts again, folds up its blooming breast,
  And on the watery surface is at rest.
Thus though awhile the spirit proudly shews,
Yet only, when the shades around her close,
On her baptismal waters finds repose.

6.

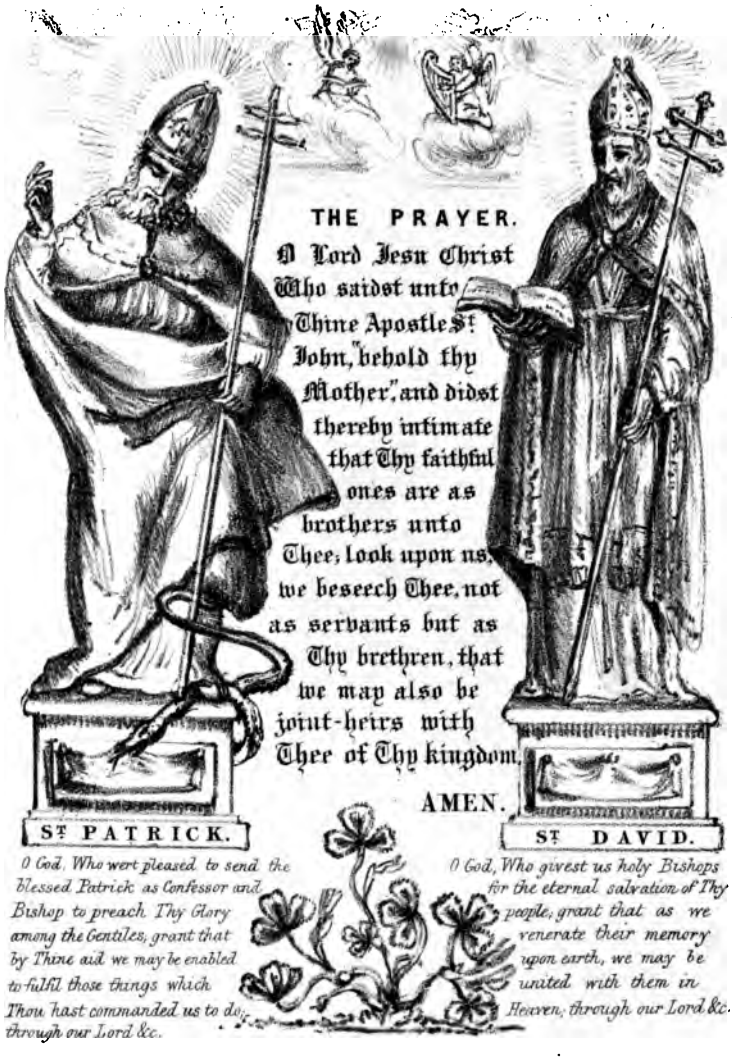
"They shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation beyond all that they looked for."

Yet surely often no enlivening ray
  Doth lighten the dark valley at its close,
  When busy thought finds no place for repose,
But ever-during dark shuts out the day.
Yea, e'en on pure meek spirits oft dismay
  Hangs, and expectance of the penal woes:
  In that deep water-flood which o'er them goes,
Of God's dark judgments, none can trace the way.
  Yet such are blessed, if thus made at last
  Like to the Son of God; and when 'tis past,
Where on the clay-cold features and closed eyes,
Death sits, there cometh forth a glad surprise,
  Which says it is "far better,"[1] or in doom
  They hear, yet scarce believe, the blessed "Come!"[2]

[1] Phil. i. 23. [2] St. Matt. xxv. 34.

Christ commends His Mother to St. John.

"Do this in remembrance of Me".


THE PRAYER.
O Lord Jesu Christ Who saidst unto Thine Apostles St. John, "behold thy Mother," and didst thereby intimate that Thy faithful ones are as brothers unto Thee; look upon us, we beseech Thee, not as servants but as Thy brethren, that we may also be joint-heirs with Thee of Thy kingdom. AMEN.
St PATRICK.
O God, Who wert pleased to send the blessed Patrick as Confessor and Bishop to preach Thy Glory among the Gentiles, grant that by Thine aid we may be enabled to fulfil those things which Thou hast commanded us to do, through our Lord &c.
St DAVID.
O God, Who givest us holy Bishops for the eternal salvation of Thy people, grant that as we venerate their memory upon earth, we may be united with them in Heaven, through our Lord &c.

XXV.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND ST. JOHN.

1.

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

NOT in the glowing centre of all bliss,
  But in the sea of overwhelming woe,
  Of sorrow beyond sorrows which men know,
The Teacher's chair is set; the dark abyss
Surrounds Him, yet can move no thought amiss,
  Or ruffle with impatience His meek Brow,
  Calm as the face of summer lake. And now
What is the lesson at death's gate, but this—
  The touching lore of filial piety,
With human sweet affections at the close,
Amid the multitude of dying throes?
  And these Thy loving words for ever rest,
Like a rose-tingèd cloud on evening sky
  That lingers, of the golden rays possessed.

2.

"Their soul was poured out into their mother's bosom."

That cloud is soon to fall in tears, when night
  Drops on that Mother of all mothers — left
  To solitude and stillness, and bereft
Of hope beyond all hope, and guiding light.
The sword is in her soul, and out of sight
  Her wounds drop tears of blood; yet every pang
  Is known to Him Whose death-pale looks now hang,
In pity and compassions infinite,
  Upon His Mother. Mother! blessed name
Of Mother, nearest to the human heart!
Affection first to come, last to depart!
  And He Who all things hallows to new love
Shall to His children grant His Church to claim
  As Mother, and a filial love to prove.

3.

"Thou art a place to hide me in."

If such Thy blessing upon filial love,
  That it should be the root of love Divine
  And semblance, and, matured in hallowed shrine,
Nurtured and fed by dews of Heaven, should prove
Love of a Father Who doth dwell above;—
  Itself diffusing in all discipline,
Beneath the fostering of the eternal Dove;—
  Then, Lord, how awful was that love of Thine
To her that bore Thee in a virgin's womb,
  Upon whose breasts Thine infant yearnings hung,
  To whom Thine infant hymns of praise were sung,
Who watched Thy dying, saw Thee in the tomb?
  But in compassion to our spirits frail,
  All is withdrawn within the silent veil.

4.

"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me."

And yet e'en filial love Thou hast put by,
  In singleness of spirit to sustain
  And build the walls of Thine unearthly reign,
Which doth require a nobler piety.
  As where the Sun meridian mounts on high,
The shadows pass away from hill and plain,
And nothing but the substance doth remain
  Beneath the blue encircling of the sky;
Or as when Day doth his broad pinions shake,
The lantern worms which shone within the brake
  Hide, and the lights which heaven's high pathway trod.
So are all lesser duties full of one
Which all fulfils,—the Presence of our Sun;
  And filial love is lost in love of God.

5.

"Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother."

Wonderful nearness unto God made Man,
  "My brother, sister, mother!" thus we see
  Strangely fulfilled that other mystery;
To Thy true children, in the eternal plan,
Manifold more vouchsafed for life's short span,
  "Brethren, sisters, and mothers,"[1] and to be
  The pledge of everlasting life with Thee;
Kindred that turn not to the grey and wan,
  But Christ our very Brother — gracious gift!
"My earthly Mother I to thee resign,—
My Mother, loved disciple, to be *thine;*
  Thou of thy kindred[2] art for Me bereft,
  By Me awhile and by thy brother[3] left:
Yet I am still thy Brother, thou art Mine."

[1] Mark x. 30. [2] Matt. iv. 22. [3] Acts xii. 2.

6.

"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."

"Woman, behold thy son!"—him that finds rest
  Upon the bosom of Goodness Infinite,
  Till truth, and love, and everlasting light,
Were ever on his tongue and in his breast.
Oh, above women she, and he most blest
  Of men; though now of all, to human sight,
  Most pitiable both, with nought but night
Around their sorrows! with their weight oppress'd,
  He takes thee to his home with nursing care.
And yet what home hath he who nothing hath,
Except to share his solitary path,
  Bereaved with thee bereaved? yea, 'tis to share
The twofold light of faith amid the gloom,
And in the Will Divine to find a home.

Christ expiring on the Cross.

The Bread broken and divided.

O God, Who, kindling the flame of love in Thy servant St Bernard, didst make him to be a burning and shining light in Thy Church, grant to us also the same spirit of love, that we may ever walk before Thee as children of light; through our Lord &c.

Multiply, O Lord, we beseech Thee in Thy Church the Spirit of Thy grace, with which Thou didst fill the blessed Charles, Thy Bishop, that Thy flock may in all places succeed and prosper, and Pastors under Thy governance may be ever grateful to Thy name, through our Lord &c.

XXVI.

CHRIST EXPIRING ON THE CROSS.

1.

"I am in misery, and like unto him that is at the point to die."

WITH Eyes which now are closed, now ope anew,
As spirits faintly ebb and faintly flow
In dying; with pale Head that now droops low,
Now turns this side, now that, with death's cold dew
Suffused; now faint upraising turns to view,
With prayers that look to Heaven, as some sore woe
Breaks on the languishment of death; and now
The slumbers of the grave press and pursue
Retiring life; while faint, with fevered tongue,
He thirsts,—with heart that burns to do God's will;
He thirsts,—each word prophetic to fulfil:
And thus, with trembling hands, His foes among,
Seizes and holds the cup of bitterness,
To His parched lips the dregs of woe to press.

2.

"Love is strong as death."

On sable wings, o'ershadowing the sun's rays,
  Death came, as to his own appointed reign,
  Where he beheld the torturing beds of pain,
Scenting afar his quarry. With amaze
He back recoils, and upon One doth gaze
  Whom he hath had no warrant to detain;
  Sinless, and yet with sorrows, his sad train,
Consorting. At the sight he doubting stays,
  Till He Who issued from the Virgin's womb,
  With voice omnipotent that cried aloud,
  Shewed Himself, amid nature's awful gloom,
Stronger than death in dying; then resigned
  Himself a willing Victim; dying bowed,
And on His Father's Breast His Head reclined.

3.

"I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

"'Tis finishèd!" That voice hath reached the shore
  Of never-ending ages, and more far
  Than hath been traversed by the highest star;
Swifter than lightning it hath pierced the door
Of Hell, and echoes there for evermore.
  'Tis finishèd: Death from life's theatre
  The everlasting portals doth unbar,
The sinless Soul hath passed, and all is o'er.
  It is a moment which we all must see,
  On which there hangs a whole eternity,
And which to each can be but once; when they
Who now in Heaven watch this our trial day
  Shall to each other say, "'tis finished;"
And men on earth shall whisper, "he is dead."

4.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me."

This thought it is which, if our love were cold,
Might lead us still, from very sympathy,
To hang our eager eyes and hearts on Thee:
That this most fearful moment must be told,
Whose memory shall never more grow old;
And that we have no strength in that dread hour
But that which emanates from this Thy power
In dying. Mortals now most proud and bold,
Who set at naught that hour, shall then most need
Thy succour, and a heart to Thee fast knit
In fellowship of suffering, used to feed
On Thee, and by austere self-rule made fit
For thoughts which ever from Thy Cross proceed,
'Neath which all penitential mourners sit.

5.

"Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

The goat, for the Lord's household to atone,
Bleeding and slain upon the altar lay,
As the most Sacred Body on this day:
The living goat, which, when all else was done,[1]
Was let go to the wilderness unknown,
"Bearing the sins of many," did portray
The Sacred Soul, which suffered such dismay
And sorrow, and from sight of men was gone.
Victims on which were laid the sins of men
Polluted and polluting were, and then
"Without the gate," as some accursed thing,
Cast forth: and surely this Sin-offering
Were one accepted, and of boundless price,
If shame and pain can mark a sacrifice.

[1] See Levit. xvi. 20: "And when he had made an end," &c.; compare with John xix. 28, 30.

6.

"She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks."

Rizpah, that keepeth watch upon her Seven,
  Sets forth the sevenfold grief of her bereaved
  Of Him Who seven fulfils, until received
Into the Eighth of Rest, the day of Heaven.
  The sixth is now consummate; this same even
Man was in Eden made; and now, reprieved
From Eden's curse, mankind, in Christ relieved,
  Shall enter on the Sabbath, where 'tis given
To rest alone with God. Thus now I know,
Daughter of Aiah, why thy sorrows so
  To holy mention have been consecrate;
  And why thy weeping form early and late
  On Gibeah's hill sits sad and desolate,
The image of another's deeper woe.

Christ upon the Cross.

"The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Which was given for thee."

O God, Who didst give unto Thy servant St Louis, amidst the deceitful pleasures of a temporal kingdom, to long with his whole heart after the joys of that which is eternal, grant us, we pray Thee, to be lovers of the same joys, of which we receive the pledge in this Sacrament: through &c.

O God, Who madest our blessed Sovereign to be more than Conqueror through Him That loved us, grant that we may imitate His patient charity, and with him become inheritors of that crown which fadeth not away: through our Lord.

XXVII.

CHRIST'S BODY ON THE CROSS.

1.

" But it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light."

THE dreadful scene is o'er, the woe is past,
  And closed in death; yet penitential grief
  Clings to the silent Cross, nor seeks relief
Elsewhere but there alone; the sun o'ercast,
Which hid itself in sorrow, now at last
  Looks forth again: but in one day so brief
  What scenes crowd thick for prayer or calm belief!
Loaded with destinies the minutes haste,
  And in one moment all is finishèd.
  Man lives, the Giver of all life is dead;
Man by His dying lives, by living dies
  To what in him was human, lives to God:
Sin dies and man revives; the serpent lies
  Slain by God-Man on the extended rod.

6.

" Thy statutes have been my songs: in the house of my pilgrimage.

And if of English bards the chief and best,
  Shakespeare and Spenser, such their sonnets wove,
  On the loose intricacies of creature love;
Like each to each as speckled eggs in nest,
Or azure pearls upon their fair one's breast,
  Or plumes on neck of the impassioned dove,
  Or bubbles which on Ocean's surface move,
Thrown from his labourings deep and dark unrest,
  As with the breeze they sport or catch the gleam:
  Then may I not unblamed, from thoughts that teem
  Mid flowers of Paradise, a nobler theme
Construct in semblance of the honied cells;
And, as the self-same measure falls and swells,
Ring on from morn to eve my music bells?

The burial of Christ.

Communion of Bread and Wine.

O God, Who didst design to be born of men, that Thou mightest make men to become sons of God; we pray Thee that those whom Thou hast filled with the bread of children, Thou wilt abundantly sanctify with the spirit of adoption, Who liveth &c.

O God, Who art our glory and rejoicing, grant that in the sweetness of this Sacrament, we may despise the vain delights of the world, and follow the examples of Thy Saints, which when in the world were not of the world, and had no joy but in Thee, through our Lord &c.

XXVIII.

THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.

I.

"Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?"

JERUSALEM, is this thy Sabbath deep
  Which with this dreadful stillness doth begin,
  After the many-voiced and murderous din,
Where thou wouldst have thy Lord His rest to keep,
In zeal against His life? O wondrous sleep,
  Which speaks in Thy redeemed a rest from sin;
  A rest which is with Thee that tomb within,—
Rest in the Rock which shall their senses steep
  In a forgetfulness of all beside,—
  A Sabbath wherein Thou Thyself shalt hide,
And work again Thy healing miracles
  Among the dead and dying; and from thence
  Choose Thine own penitent that dies to sense,
And with Thee in the eternal Sabbath dwells.

2.

"We are buried with Him by Baptism unto death."

Where is Thy resting-place, Lord, after all
  The sufferings of Thy Flesh so long and keen?
  Where dost thou keep Thy Sabbath all unseen?
Make Thou my heart as this sepulchral hall,
Though filled with recollections that appal;
  Till from a sepulchre, by Thee made clean,
  It shall become a temple all serene.
The World doth still against Thee press her call,
  Some whisper grave and low, and mourning sigh,
  And others loudly cry out, Crucify!
Yea, in each heart the Priests and multitude
Against Thee rise. With locks all dripping blood,
  Where shalt Thou rest in the wide world forlorn,
  But in the new-made breast of them that mourn?

3.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

As Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb,
  Nor the cold uncouth manger, and the stall
  Of the rude hinds and bleating animal,
Nor childhood's bands and Nazareth's low room,
Nor touch of unclean sinner, nor the gloom
  Of Ades, nor the over-hanging cave,
  Shrouding Thee round with darkness of the grave;
But as the Sun vile places doth illume
  Untainted by the foulness, so didst Thou,
  Loving that lowliness which stoop'd so low
  From the Heaven of Heavens, still lowlier love to bow
To meanest things on earth, yet take no stain.—
Then wilt Thou not a humble Guest sustain—
To enter my poor heart, and there remain?

4.

"They shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Me as one mourneth for his only son."

Hard hath my heart been as the stony rock,
  Yet therein would I make a place for Thee,
  Where nought that breathes of mortal vanity
May more be laid, which might Thy sorrows mock;
But mournful Contemplation with a stock
  Of better thoughts wait on Thee in my breast.
  And if Thou thus wouldst deign with me to rest,
I would 'gainst all things else my senses lock;
  Like a closed sepulchre, where the rock weeps,
From very coldness, the ethereal dew
Condensing into drops, where hid from view
  Around the cave the weeping moisture creeps.
  So in this evening of my waning years
  I would therein receive Thee with my tears.

5.

"Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

And if in soul and body, by long pain,
  All that is earthly shall be mortified,
  And Thou therein Thy quickening Presence hide,
That which is stony wilt Thou burst in twain,
As from stern Winter's womb, and rise and reign
  In vernal resurrection, to abide
  Here in new life by sorrow sanctified
Awhile, her course of trial to sustain,
  And then arise to Heaven; and here below
  The tide of all my thoughts, that ebb and flow
In joy or sadness, may in either still
  Be quickened by an all-inspiring Love,
And so may move obedient to Thy will,
  Responsive to the drawings from above.

6.

"My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments."

Would that my heart were meet to be Thy rest
  In holy stillness; would that I might dwell
  With Thee alone in this Thy rocky cell,
And shut out all the world! O thought most blest,
And yet of all most dreadful, dispossessed
  Of all things which the self-proud spirit swell,
  To be alone with Thee — approachable
By nought but holy thoughts, or thoughts distressed
  That yearn to be so! As the solemn night
In contemplation wrapt and silent gloom,
  With all her stars and covering of thick shade;
So this our burial with Thee in the tomb
  Is semblance of the time when out of sight
  The disembodied soul with Thee is laid.

Christ's Body wrapped in linen.

The Elements covered with a fair linen cloth.

THE PRAYER.

O Lord Jesu Christ, Whose most sacred Body was by Joseph of Arimathea wrapped in a clean linen cloth, and when wound in linen clothes with the spices was laid in the sepulchre, grant, I pray Thee, that my heart and body may be embalmed with the sweet odor of all virtue, and that Thou mayest abide with us for ever.

AMEN.

St MARTHA.

O God, Who didst deign to be a Guest in the house of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary; grant that with Lazarus we may walk in newness of life, may feed Thee in Thy poor with Martha, and by meditation may with Mary feed on Thy word;.

St MARY.

O Lord Jesu, Who art pleased by these Divine sacraments to be a Guest in us, grant us, we pray Thee, to be partakers of those heavenly blessings, which Thou didst shed abundantly on Lazarus, Martha and Mary, those sacred friends whom Thou didst deign to visit;.

XXIX.

THE COVERING OF CHRIST'S BODY.

1.

"I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day."

COMES Nicodemus too? not as of old
  Muffling his face in mantle of the night,
  To hold his converse with the Prince of light,
But even by despair now rendered bold.
O blessed hands that lifeless frame to hold,
  And bear! O mournful beatific sight!
  With eloquent tongue of that sepulchral rite
Ordained of old, whose fragrant sweets enfold,
  And speak of Resurrection in the grave!
  He dies, when others He had power to save;
While women hang the speechless head and weep:
As when some shepherd for his helpless sheep
  Is slain, and prostrate lies upon the ground,
  His flock like downcast mourners stand around.

2.

"His rest shall be glorious."

Yea, company most blest, most sad below,
  With odours sweet, (O contravention strange!)
  To antedate of death the loathsome change;
As if to struggle with the last dread foe
E'en in his own dark kingdom, nor forego
  The prey that seemed already his, but plant
  Tokens of joy and living covenant
E'en in corruption's range of utter woe.
  With linen white and clean for the dark tomb,
  Like spotless snow from Heaven in winter's gloom,
Falling upon some still and shadowy night,
While stars keep watch throughout the infinite;
To shelter with its covering soft and bright
  Dead nature—ere it put on vernal bloom.

3.

"And with the rich in His death."

But what are these, the costly liniment,
  Sabean odours, Araby's perfume,
  That wrap His pallid Body in the tomb?
Was it for this, in sad presentiment,
Kings from the rich and fragrant East were sent
  To where that star's pale radiance did illume
That stable-cave, wherein a Mother leant
  Upon the offspring of her Virgin womb?
When festal scents of myrrh and frankincense
  Were soon to blend with weeping Rachel's cry,
And dying shrieks of murdered Innocents,—
While kingly worshippers around Him press,
  And Tyrian garb and gold of Araby
Seemed but to mock His cold and nakedness.

4.

"A bundle of myrrh is my Well-Beloved unto me."

But what may these the odorous spices mean
  That are with Thee within the winding-sheet?
  It is the embalming of affections sweet
From bodies mortified and souls serene,
That tend Thee in that "linen white and clean,"
  Which is "the righteousness of saints," made meet
  Around Thy bleeding Head and wounded Feet
To watch, and in the silent heart unseen,—
  Embalming with the sighs of pensive love,
Which fragrance hath of immortality,
  And finds a place among those souls that prove
Dead to this world of sense, and hide with Thee;
  Like Magdalene, whose praise is seal'd above,
And breathes on earth for ages yet to be.

5.

"In the secret place of His dwelling shall He hide me."

When such affections in the heart are found,
  They ever love the solitude and shade,
  And covered in the grave with Christ are laid;
As lies the fleecy mantle on the ground
Sheltering the roots, which shall anon abound
  With Resurrection; or as buds, afraid
  Of gales severe or gentle, have arrayed
Themselves in leafy coverings all around;
  Or as the flowers that ope their dewy cup
  To their own sun, but soon again fold up
Their fragrant bosom from the nightly dew,
  Or nipping blasts; e'en so themselves unclose
To Christ the heart's affections; then from view
  Hide in the tomb with Him, and there repose.

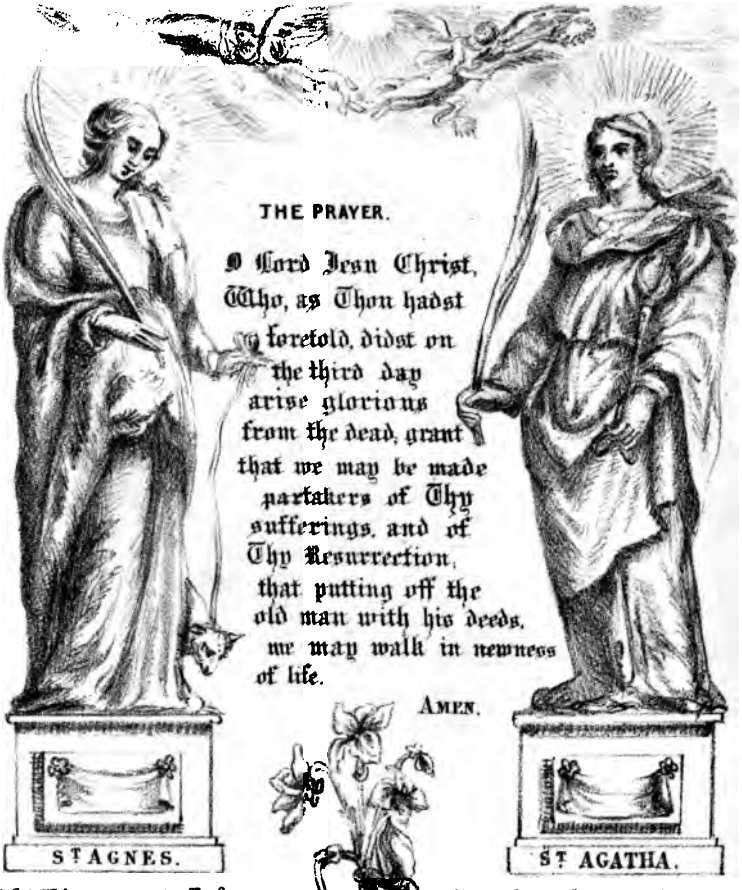
6.

"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

O that the wondrous secrets of Thine Ark,
  The Godhead and the Manhood joined in one,
  Were safe in the withdrawals of Thy throne
From tongues of busy men, where shadows dark
Environ, and no eye of man can mark,
  Where Faith and Love may entering be alone,
  And feed on thoughts to adoration known.
Yet there intrude rash men to blow the spark
  Of angry disputations, from the coal
Ta'en from Thine Altar, fill'd with fire of Heaven,
  To sanctify the lips, and cleanse the soul.
While at Thy shrine, whence worshippers are driven,
  Range disputants which on each other frown,
  Where Angels veil their faces and bow down.

Christ risen.

The Post Communion.



O God, Who givest us in this Thy Sacrament the earnest of eternal joys, grant that we may imitate the constancy of this Thy youthful servant, who in her desires after immortality made haste unto death. Through our Lord.

Almighty God, by whose gift the blessed Agatha obtained the palm of Virginity and Martyrdom, grant us to preserve purity of body and mind, that we be not overcome by the allurements of the flesh, nor the bitterness of sufferings. Through our Lord.

XXX.

CHRIST RISEN.

1.

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

How beautiful to watch the rising sun,
  Afar upon the horizon's radiant brim
  Appearing, mid the gathering shadows dim,
With all which ere his course hath yet begun
  His rising bright are wont to wait upon;
With clouds like burning robes of Seraphim
Around him, and Creation's varied hymn
  Greeting his coming with her benison!
  Daily memorial of that glorious morn,
When the foundations of the world were laid,
  And sons of God in multitudinous chime
  Were heard,—prelusive of this better time,
  Whereon the new creation first is born,
Arising from a night of darker shade.

2.

"I will yet make doctrine to shine as the morning, and will send forth her light afar off."

And if Creation to our sight restored
  Such daily reminiscence brings to view,
  Much more shall kingdoms of His grace renew
Memorials of her dead and rising Lord,
  When in our heart of hearts, the Morning true,
He comes, our daily Bread,—loved and adored,—
  The Light of lights on our Baptismal dew
Fresh shining with new day; the Living Word,
  At whose command arose light's order stern
From the abyss, and onward moves till now.
  Thus oft as from Thine Altar I return,
  Thy Resurrection doth within me burn;
Streams of fresh light upon my spirits flow,
And bathe my dull affections with their glow.

3.

"Neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared."

But if all power is wont to hide from sight,
  Like God and His good Angels; as the wind
  Impels and moulds the clouds, as viewless mind
Moves matter, and in mind the impervious might
Of reason, passion, or the spiritual light
  Energise on the will, the purpose bind,
  With all its secret movements intertwined;—
Much less can aught of sense discern aright,
When at God's holy Altar, with new dawn,
And healing on His wings, there doth arise
  The Sun of Righteousness; and in the soul
From feeling and impassioned sense withdrawn,
  Incarnate God, the Living Altar-coal,
Enters the soul, the body sanctifies.

4.

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

Christ rises;—lightning-stricken at the sight,
  The armed soldiery, who at the tomb
  Kept their unholy watch, and walked the gloom,
Fall back, their faces hide in dread affright,
And like the scared shadows of the night
  Hasten away: as when the aërial dome
  The rising moon doth suddenly illume,
With silent intervention calm and bright
  Just rising, and the clouds departing fly,
And flying feebly catch her silver ray.
  E'en so those Heathen thoughts which held their sway,
And ever in the heart were hiding nigh,
  When Christ doth visit us before His way
Shall flee, and He shall fill the untroubled sky.

5.

"If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection."

Christ rises;—not alone, with Him His own
  Are rising from their graves, and burst the veil,
  And look again on this their earthly jail;
E'en as the moon doth not arise alone,
But watchful sentinels attend her throne,
  Yet love that they themselves should fade and fail,
  In her surpassing lustre dim and pale.
'Tis thus when Christ within the soul made known
  His glorious Resurrection shall declare,
His love and light shall dissipate the gloom;
Nor shall He thither unattended come,
But all the graces with Him make their home,
  When He the darkness of the soul lays bare,
  Fain to vouchsafe His gracious Presence there.

6.

"By the blood of Thy covenant I have sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit wherein there is no water."

"Unbind the grave-clothes, loose him, let him go!"
So spake the Lord when Lazarus had risen
From the dark night of death's mysterious prison,
Opening his eyes to see the day; and so
His ministers absolve, and heal the woe,
And from death-fetters set the sinner free,
Ere he at table sits, good Lord, with Thee.
And witnesses there are of all below;
As when Christ left the unbroken virgin tomb,
An Angel roll'd away the heavy stone,
In witness of the triumphs He had won.
Thus, too, the blessed Angels at the end,
In the great Resurrection, shall descend,—
A solemn witness on each soul attend.

Christ shews Himself to His disciples.

"fulfilled with Thy grace and heavenly benediction"

THE PRAYER.
O Lord Jesu Christ
Who after Thy death
wast seen first of all
by Mary Magdalene,
and afterwards by Thy
disciples; may I ever see
Thee with the eyes of
a pure faith, working
by love; and be at
length blessed by
beholding Thee in Thy
glory.
AMEN.
ST CECILIA.
O God, Who declarest that Thou wilt dwell amongst us rathers in the pure in heart; grant that after the example of Thy Servant Cecilia, we may through thy grace continue such as Thou deignest to dwell in, Who livest and reignest.
ST CATHARINE
Almighty and Everlasting God, Who choosest the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, mercifully grant that by faith we may follow the constancy of this Thy Martyr, through our Lord.

XXXI.

CHRIST APPEARING.

1.

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone."

THOU that art in the rocky clefts, my Dove;
  Thou that in secret of the stairs dost dwell,
  And hidest Thee within Thy stony cell,—
Oh, let me see Thy countenance of love;
Oh, let me hear Thy voice; as from above
  The day breaks and the shadows flee away.
  Winter is past and gone; the young harts stray
Upon the hills; the turtle in the grove
  Anticipates the dawn, heard though unseen
  Mid the dark pine-tree tops and tender green
Of vine and fig-tree; and the lilies bright
  Put forth their flowrets from the leafy screen.
And who is she looks forth, as morning light,
Expecting? Rise, my soul, to meet this sight!

2.

"I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me."

I hear His voice: "Before the dawning day,
  Lo, at thy door before the morning light
I knock; arise My love," I hear him say,
"Arise, my love, my fair one, come away:
  My locks are dripping with the dews of night,
  My head is filled with dew. Come to My sight,
  Open the door, together take our flight,
And in our own celestial gardens stray:
  The fountains are unsealed, the south-winds blow,
  And from their beds the breathing spices flow.
Come, let us see if tender grapes appear
Upon our vine, if summer yet be near.
  Rise up and haste; for all the rest are gone:
  My love, my undefilèd is but one."

3.

"With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early."

My bowels while He spake were in me moved;
  To my Beloved I opened, and the dawn
  Was there; but my Light had Himself withdrawn.
I sought, but could not find Him. My Beloved,
I call Thee, but Thou answerest not. I roved,
  And in the twilight sought, but He was gone.
  O Thou so early found, but lost too soon,
Where shall I seek Thy countenance unreproved?
  My heart is faint within me. Is it so,
That I must ever seek Thee, and complain;
  Still hear Thy voice, and ever wandering go
After the sound, yet ask for Thee in vain;
  Feeling Thee near, and strive Thy feet to hold,
  And, finding nothing, grasp Thy mantle's fold?

4.

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."

Soft was His Presence as the gentle snow,
  That falls from Heaven and lies upon the ground,
  Then vanishes, that not a trace is found
Where it had been; or as the witness bow,
Fearful though bright, that hastening seems to go
  As gently as it came. Such dread profound,
  Such light and gloom, such tears and gleams abound
Upon its stay, that ere we seemed to know
  And calculate our promise, it was fled.
  Yet oft returns His Presence from the dead,
We know not how, but mid this earthly storm
He promised, and He hastens to perform,
  In sacramental sign, by which we live,
  The covenanted promise to forgive.

5.

"What is commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence; it is not needful for thee to see with thine eyes the things that are in secret."

Where doth the Mother veil her weeping eyes?
  Doth Christ unto her longing sight reveal
  His Presence, on her grief in silence steal?
Or cheer her soul in some celestial guise?
On such, the hidden secret of the skies,—
  Whereon the All-Wise Spirit sets the seal
  Of silence, from our searches to conceal,
With the thick veil of thrice six centuries,—
  Let not man's curious judgment there intrude,
  Nor in that awe-encompassed solitude
Set foot; lest error should herself entwine
To blend with human fiction truth divine;
  And blindness strike our thoughts, too bold of heart,
  Which dare to look where Christ doth stand apart.

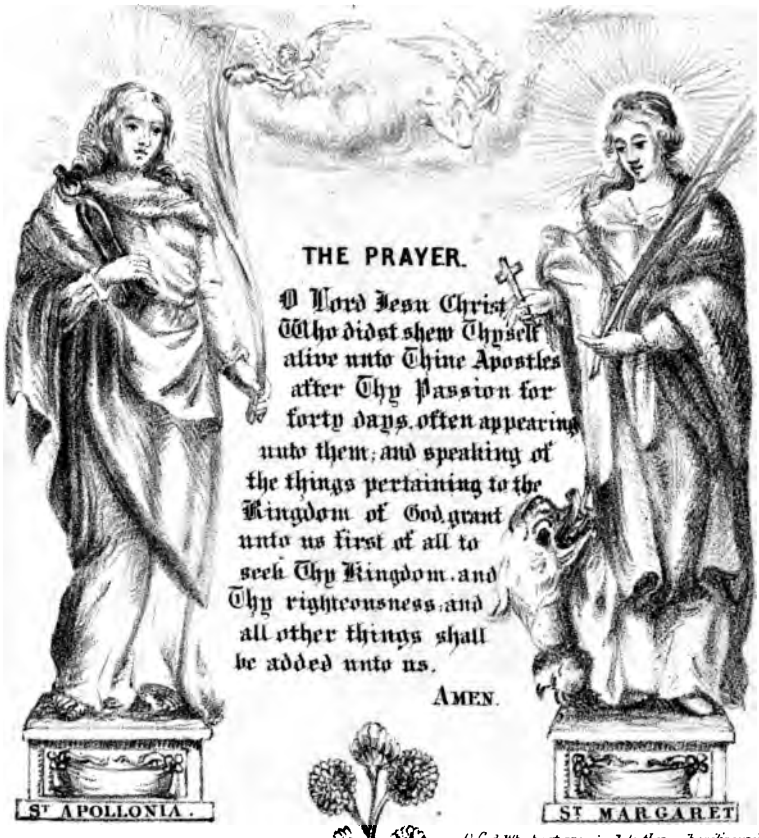
6.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

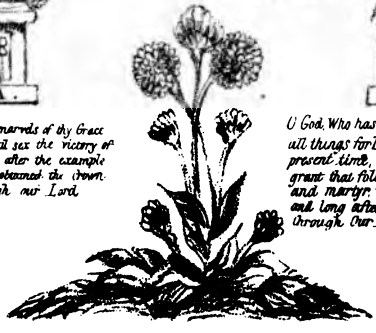
And Faith, with marvel-working influence,
  Vouchsafes a blessedness beyond the sight,
  Which lies within, far deeper than the light
That visits our gross eyes; with other sense
Than that which is by fleshly instruments
  Adoring sees, and feels, and knows delight:
  Sure man's high-wrought imaginings may blight
The majesty retired and reverence
  Due to immortal Truth. We know full well
What He reveals is as a sea replete
With knowledge and with wisdom; and if meet
  That when He speaks we should in trembling dwell
On all that issues from His holy seat,
  His silence too is most adorable.

Christ appears for forty days.

"that we may continue in that holy fellowship"



O God, Who amongst other marvels of thy Grace hast conferred, even on the frail sex the victory of Martyrdom, make us to walk after the example of those who by faith have obtained the crown that fadeth not away, through our Lord.



O God, Who hast promised to them who relinquish all things for Thy sake a hundred fold in this present time, and hereafter everlasting life, grant that following the steps of Thy virgin and martyr we may despise things perishable and long after those which alone shall remain; through Our Lord.

XXXII.

THE FORTY DAYS.

1.

"In that day shall the Lord of Hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people."

O GLORIOUS, wonderful, and blessed days,
  When Christ full oft at each accustomed scene
  Walked in the Resurrection, — oft unseen,
And oft appearing to the adoring gaze;
At morn or eve, on travellers' pensive ways,
  By rocky cove, or shore, or mount serene,
  Or at the social board, would intervene,
In veil of flesh hiding His Godhead's blaze;
  Unknown, yet well known; in such marvellous change,
Like the impalpable air, in stillness brought
Through close-barred doors, silent, swift, calm as thought,
  Yet palpable: in vast and boundless range,
Setting the laws of matter all at naught,
  And yet the same in transmutation strange.

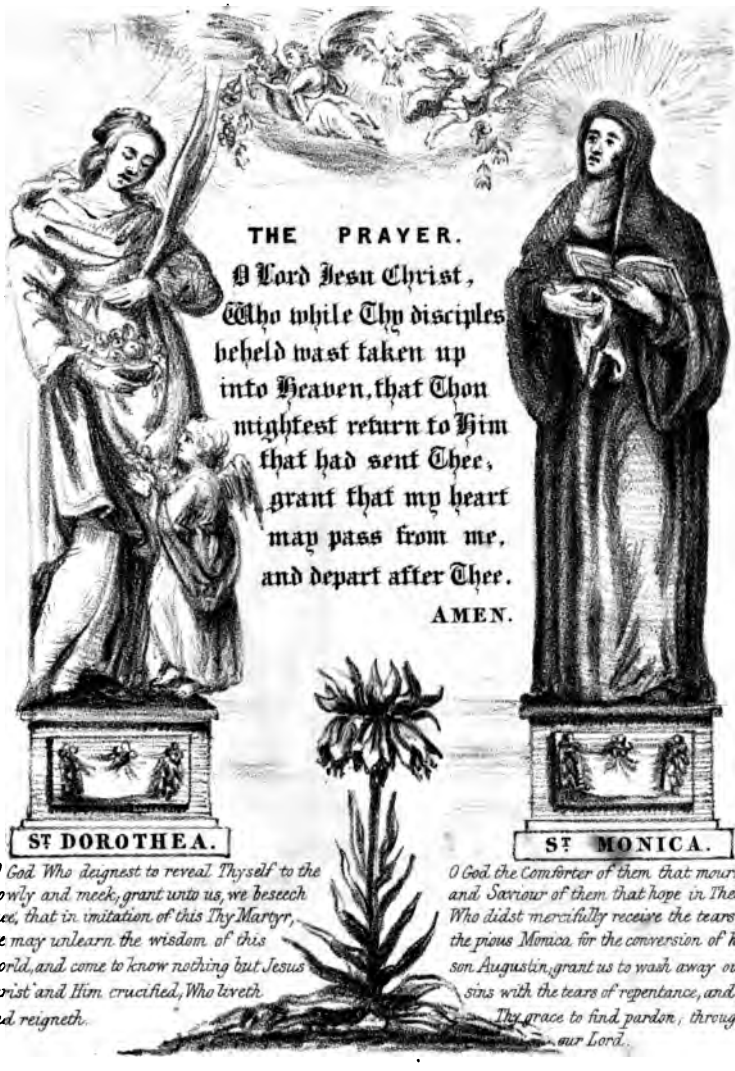
6.

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

But if no hand or thought can rightly paint
  That scene so terrible and yet so fair,
  Much less can mortal thought,—by grovelling care,
Or low pursuit, or the defiling taint
Of foul imaginings void of restraint,
  Made sensual,—from things of earth, sea, air,
  Learn aught of those bright things beyond compare.
Yea, saintly souls themselves are frail and faint
  Aught to conceive of that high blessedness:
They gain no glimpse, or if they should attain,
  Yet find no words that vision to express;
Or if they language find to speak, no less
  Their burning words to others speak in vain,
  Who hear but cannot understand the strain.

Christ ascends to Heaven.

"Glory be to God on high."


THE PRAYER.
O Lord Jesu Christ,
Who while Thy disciples
beheld wast taken up
into Heaven, that Thou
mightest return to Him
that had sent Thee,
grant that my heart
may pass from me,
and depart after Thee.
AMEN.
St DOROTHEA.
O God Who deignest to reveal Thyself to the lowly and meek, grant unto us, we beseech Thee, that in imitation of this Thy Martyr, we may unlearn the wisdom of this world, and come to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, Who liveth and reigneth.
St MONICA.
O God the Comforter of them that mourn, and Saviour of them that hope in Thee; Who didst mercifully receive the tears of the pious Monica for the conversion of her son Augustin, grant us to wash away our sins with the tears of repentance, and by Thy grace to find pardon; through our Lord.

XXXIII.

THE ASCENSION.

1.

"Who maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind."

He hath gone up on high, the Heavens appear
  To stoop for Him, and earth itself to rise
  To send Him thither; henceforth earth and skies
Seem as if reconciled to draw more near,
While for His Saints He is preparing there
  A place, though hidden from our mortal eyes;
  And in those hearts which unto Him arise
By His descending gracious Comforter,
  Preparing for Himself a place below,
  From mortal eyes though hidden,—with new laws
  Thus lifted up the souls of men He draws
  After Him, where above He pleads their cause,—
Draws after Him, as sparks that upward go,
And rise unto the sun from whence they flow.

2.

"If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee: but if not, it shall not be so."

As from an exile's sad and ruin'd coast,
They who would send one to prepare a home
In happier climes, where they themselves would come,
And watch him in departing; yet, when lost,
Miss his protecting hand, and feel then most
Bereaved; so we, where clouds the skies illume,
Watch Him ascend, and feel an evening gloom
Steal o'er us on our way by shadows cross'd.
But if our hearts we wean from things of sense,
And cleanse our eyes by faith and abstinence
To see Him still in His departing hence,
The mantle of His peace shall on us rest,
His Spirit's double portion fill our breast;
And we e'en by His absence be more blest.

3.

"Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more."

'Tis said, in love there is this mystery,
That we cannot recall the absent glance,
Nor very self of a dear countenance,
When far away; of this the cause may be
That those we love are one with us, and we
Cannot behold ourselves. When out of sight
Thus love runs forth to what is infinite;
And so the more we love, the less we see:
For it is given to feed on the Divine,
When we the human lose; and the Unseen
Comes to be with us more, the more we wean
Our thoughts from what is sensible. Be mine
The better part to see not, yet believe:
Although the more I love, the more I grieve.

4.

"For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind."

The human soul is yearning after love,
And finding not still feels itself alone,
Turning from side to side with ceaseless moan;
Or finding what may her affections move,
The object of her love turns to reprove,
By misplaced trust, or stern disunion,
Or disappointment; or if raised to One,
Who is the Everlasting rest above
Of Spirits divine, though for awhile unseen;
The more her inward poverty she knows,
And finds unrest in seeking for repose:
Nor can sustain her to those heights serene
Against the attractions of our lower birth,
Whose gravitation draws her back to earth.

5.

"He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

But since our God Incarnate is on high,
And in mysterious channels from the skies
Blends with our fallen nature; and brought nigh
Flows into all our human sympathies,
The everlasting Life of those that die;
No longer may our love thus buried lie
In low-born cares, with not a thought to rise,
And walk amid those pure societies;
Till life itself becomes the sepulchre
Of the undying soul; itself the prey
Of creeping things, or things far worse than they;
Imbedded in unworthy hope and fear,
Ere in the tomb, in its appointed day,
Its mantle of corruption disappear.

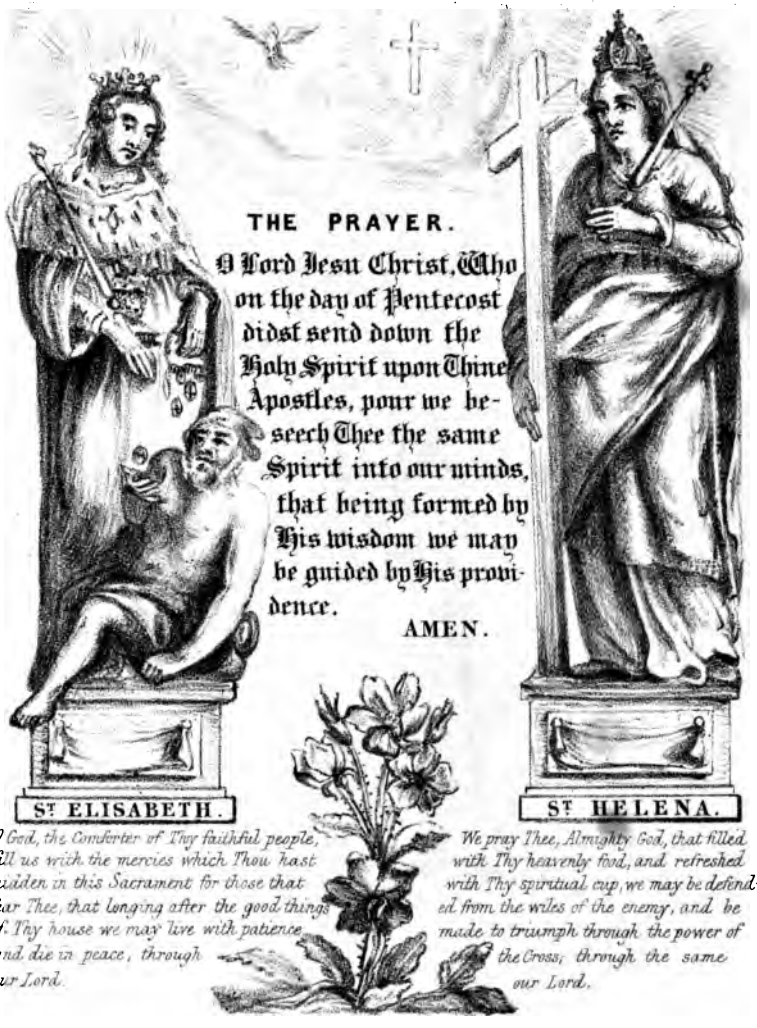
6.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice."

For now our very flesh He hath put on,
  And in the intricate spirit thus hath wound
  With involutions many and profound,
And e'en from our corruption hath begun
To hallow the affections He hath won,
  And feelings human and Divine hath bound
  To His own service; with them to surround
His place of rest and Sabbath: as the sun
  Drowns in itself all lesser fires to feed
Its own,—itself afar yet wondrous near:
So may He with regenerating fear
  As from our being's centre still proceed
  To every inmost feeling, word, and deed,—
To every outward sense, and eye, and ear.

The descent of the Holy Spirit.

The Benediction.



O God, the Comforter of Thy faithful people, fill us with the mercies which Thou hast hidden in this Sacrament for those that fear Thee, that longing after the good things of Thy house we may live with patience and die in peace, through our Lord.

We pray Thee, Almighty God, that filled with Thy heavenly food, and refreshed with Thy spiritual cup, we may be defended from the wiles of the enemy, and be made to triumph through the power of the Cross; through the same our Lord.

XXXIV.

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1.

"Their eyes saw the Majesty of His glory, and their ears heard His glorious voice."

"LET there be Light!" God said: and at the sound,
With varied order, beautiful and young,
From the dead formless void Creation sprung,
And sea and land with their alternate bound,
And shining worlds that range the blue profound,
With hills and woods, and beasts the hills among,
And painted birds that in the forest sung,
And flowers of scent and hue that deck'd the ground,
And seas and streams where roam'd the finny herd.
But how much more when that creative Word,
The Gift Unspeakable on man conferr'd,
Was seen in flaming tongues that came to sight,
And heard in rushing winds of viewless might,
Saying to man's dark soul, "Let there be Light!"

2.

"The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

"Let there be Light!" Dead matter heard of old,
When the foundations of the world were laid,
And e'en in hearing instantly obeyed.
But twice nine hundred years have onward roll'd,
Since with His gifts and graces manifold
The Spirit hath gone forth with light arrayed,
And the Almighty fiat hath been said;
Then why is the fulfilment yet untold?
There was of days a numbering and delay
When rose this visible scene of earth and sky,
Which hastes so fast to fade away and die:
To the All-wise it needs a longer day,
From the soul's endless ruin and decay,
To form a world for immortality.

3.

"For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday: seeing that is past as a watch in the night."

It needs a longer time to reinstate:—
The world arose in six days at His word,
And clothed itself in beauty as it heard;
But ere the mighty water-floods abate,
Which once have issued from the penal gate,
When Ocean for its cleansing hath been stirr'd,
By days and weeks and months must be deferred.
It needs a once-lost world to renovate
Much time, much suffering, many words, much price,
Of God Himself the costly Sacrifice,
With a long system of atoning pains
In shadows or in substance, which remains
From the beginning to the end of time,
When all shall fill One Mighty Truth Sublime.

4.

"As a drop of water unto the sea, and a gravel-stone in comparison of the sand; so are a thousand years to the days of eternity."

But if the things beheld so glorious seem,
  And long the time to be, and which hath been;
  But yet how short the time, how poor the scene
Compared with that which issues from this dream,
Of which the sun is but a spark or beam?
  And it may be, when death shall intervene,
  All time hath comprehended then is seen
As instantaneous as a lightning gleam;
  Or as when God first spake, and there was light.
E'en now more old we grow, or more the soul
Is in her view enlarged, or to the goal
  Draws near, more brief appear the things of sight:
How short shall then appear this little whole,
  When we behold it from the shore aright?

5.

"I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number.

How populous, 'tis said, is solitude!
  Men hear it, and receive the truth sublime,
Yet mark not why. If rightly understood,
It is the company of the wise and good:
  In solitude we pass from present time,
  Above the living crowd we needs must climb,
And make the past and future our abode.
Thus when in solitary thoughts we brood
  Upon the City which descends from high,
Before and after are unnumber'd eyes,
Such as are found in the eternal skies,
More than the thickest earthly companies:
  And we may blend in the society
  Of Saints, which on the breast of Jesus lie.

6.

"Before man is life and death; and whether him liketh shall be given him."

When at the Word of power creation rose,
  The elements to their appointed place
  All hastened, each to hold their separate space;
Earth, Sea, and Air, and Light and Darkness chose
Each their own realms, and barriers interpose,
  Distinct in their gradations; each his race
  To run, and to fulfil his day of grace.
And we too, who have heard His voice, must close,
  And take our stations, or we are undone.
That Word of power hath gone forth to all lands,
With gifts, and benedictions, and commands;
  And gather'd in unto the Holy One,
Sprinkled with blood, each Saintly Spirit stands,
  Before the Lamb that sitteth on the throne.

THE END.

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